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John Adams. 1769

MORAL AND POLITICAL
DIALOGUES;

WITH

LETTERS ON
CHIVALRY AND ROMANCE:

BY THE

REVEREND MR. HURD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

THE THIRD EDITION.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N,

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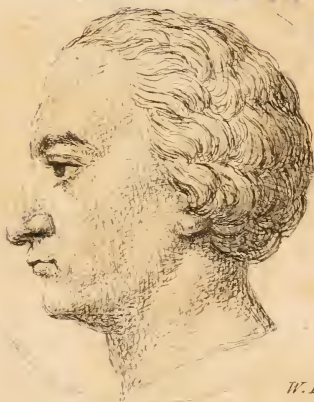
S A C R E D

TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE

R A L P H A L L E N E S Q.

O F

P R I O R - P A R K.



*W. Heath sc.
Bath. 1767*

SI NOBIS ANIMVM BONI VIRI LICERET INSPICERE, O
QVAM PVLCRAM FACIEM, QVAM SANCTAM, QVAM
EX MAGNIFICO PLACIDOQVE FVLGENTEM VIDERE-
MV S! NEMO ILLVM AMABILEM, QVI NON SIMV
VENERABILEM, DICERET. SENECA.

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M O R A L
AND
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VOL. I.

f

DIA-



P R E F A C E

ON THE

MANNER OF WRITING DIALOGUE:

THE former editions of these Dialogues were given without a name, and under the fictitious person of an Editor: Not; the reader may be sure, for any purpose so silly as that of imposing on the Public; but for reasons of another kind, which it is not difficult to apprehend.

HOWEVER these reasons, whatever they were, subsisting no longer, the writer is now to appear in his

own person ; and the respect, he owes to the public, makes him think it fit to bespeak their acceptance of these volumes in another manner, than he supposed would be readily permitted to him, under his assumed character.

I. IN an age, like this, when most men seem ambitious of turning writers, many persons may think it strange that the kind of composition, which was chiefly in use among the masters of this numerous and stirring family, hath been hitherto neglected.

WHEN the ANTIENTS had any thing—

“ BUT what, it will be said, always the *Antients* ? And are we
“ never

“ never to take a pen in hand, but
“ the first question must still be,
“ what our masters, the antients,
“ have been pleased to dictate to
“ us? ONE man understands, that
“ the antient Ode was distinguish-
“ ed into several parts, called by I
“ know not what strange names;
“ and then truly an English Ode
“ must be tricked out in the same
“ fantastic manner. ANOTHER has
“ heard of a wise, yet merry, com-
“ pany called a Chorus, which was
“ always singing or preaching in
“ the Greek Tragedies; and then,
“ besure, nothing will serve but we
“ must be sung and preached to,
“ in our’s. While a THIRD, is
“ smitten with a tedious long-wind-
“ ed thing, which was once en-
“ dured under the name of Dia-
“ logue;

“logué; and strait we have Dia-
 “logues of this formal cut, and are
 “told withall, that no man may
 “presume to write them, on any
 “other model.”

THUS the modern critic, with much complacency and even gayety — But I resume the sentence I set out with, and observe, “WHEN THE ANTIENTS had any thing to say to the world on the subject either of morals or government, they generally chose the way of DIALOGUE, for the conveyance of their instructions; as supposing they might chance to gain a readier acceptance in this agreeable form, than any other.”

Hæc adeo penitus curâ videre sagaci
 Otia qui studiis læti tenuere decoris,

Inque

P R E F A C E.

INQUE ACADEMIA umbriferâ nitidoque
LYCEO

Fuderunt claras fœcundi pectoris artes.

SUCH was the address, or fancy
at least, of the wise ANTIENTS.

THE MODERNS, on the contrary,
have appeared to reverence themselves or their cause, too much, to think that either stood in need of this oblique management. No writer has the least doubt of being favourably received in all companies, let him come upon us in what shape he will: And, not to stand upon ceremony, when he brings so welcome a present, as what he calls *Truth*, with him, he obtrudes it upon us in the direct way of Dissertation.

No body, I suppose, objects to this practice, when important truths indeed are to be taught, and when the abilities of the Teacher are such as may command respect. But the case is different, when writers presume to try their hands upon us, without these advantages. Nay, and even with them, it can do no hurt, when the subject is proper for familiar discourse, to throw it into this gracious and popular form.

I HAVE said, *where the subject is proper for familiar discourse*; for all subjects, I think, cannot, or should not, be treated in this way.

It is true, the inquisitive genius of the Academic Philosophy gave
great

great scope to the freedom of debate. Hence the origin of the Greek Dialogue : of which if PLATO was not the Inventor, he was, at least, the Model,

THIS sceptical humour was presently much increased ; and every thing was now disputed, not for PLATO's reason (which was, also, his master's) for the sake of exposing *Falshood* and discovering *Truth* ; but, because it was pretended that nothing could be certainly affirmed to be either *true* or *false*.

And, when afterwards CICERO, our other great master of Dialogue, introduced this sort of writing into *Rome*, we know that, besides his

profession of the Academic Sect, now extended and indeed outraged into absolute scepticism, the very purpose he had in philosophizing, and the rhetorical uses to which he put his Philosophy, would determine him very naturally to the same practice.

THUS all subjects, of what nature and importance soever, were equally discussed in the antient Dialogue ; till matters were at length brought to that pass, that the only end, proposed by it, was to shew the writer's dexterity in disputing for, or against any opinion, without referring his disputation to any certain use or conclusion at all.

SUCH

SUCH was the character of the antient, and especially of the Ciceronian Dialogue; arising out of the genius and principles of those times.

BUT for us to follow our masters in this licence would be, indeed, to deserve the objected charge of *servile Imitators*; since the reasons, that led them into it, do not subsist in our case. They disputed every thing, because they believed nothing. We should forbear to dispute some things, because they are such as, both for their sacredness, and certainty, no man in his senses affects to disbelieve. At least, the stoic BALBUS may teach us a decent reserve in *one* instance, *Since, as he observes, it is a wicked and*
impious

impious custom to dispute against the Being, Attributes, and Providence of God, whether it be under an assumed character, or in one's own [a].

THUS much I have thought fit to say, to prevent mistakes, and to shew of what kind the subjects are which may be allowed to enter into modern Dialogue. They are only such, as are either, in the strict sense of the word, *not* important, and yet afford an ingenuous pleasure in the discussion of them; or not *so* important as to exclude the sceptical inconclusive air, which the decorum of polite dialogue necessarily demands.

[a] Mala et impia consuetudo est contra Deos disputandi, five ex animo id fit, five simulatè. *De Nat. D.* l. ii. c. 67.

AND,

AND, under these restrictions, we may treat a number of curious and useful subjects, in this form. The benefit will be that which the ancients certainly found in this practice, and which the great master of life finds in the general way of candour and politeness,

— parentis viribus, atque
Extenuantis eas consultò —

FOR, though Truth be not formally delivered in Dialogue, it may be insinuated; and a capable writer will find means to do this so effectually as, in discussing both sides of a question, to engage the reader insensibly on that side, where the Truth lies.

II. BUT *convenience* is not the only consideration. The NOVELTY of the thing, itself, may well recommend it to us.

FOR, when every other species of composition has been tried, and men are grown so fastidious as to receive with indifference the best modern productions, on account of the too common form, into which they are cast, it may seem an attempt of some merit to revive the only one, almost, of the antient models, which hath not yet been made cheap by vulgar imitation.

I CAN imagine the reader will conceive some surprize, and, if he be not a candid one, will perhaps
express

express some disdain, at this pretence to Novelty, in cultivating the *Dialogue-form*. For what, he will say, has been more frequently aimed at in our own, and every modern language? Has not every art, nay, every science, been taught in this way? And, if the vulgar use of any mode of writing be enough to discredit it, can there be room even for wit and genius to retrieve the honour of this trite and hackneyed form?

THIS, no doubt, may be said; but by those who know little of the antient Dialogue, or who have not attended to the true manner in which the rules of good writing require it to be composed.

WE have what are called Dialogues in abundance ; and the authors, for any thing I know, might please themselves with imagining, they had copied PLATO or CICERO. But in our language, at least (and, if I extended the observation to the other modern ones of most estimation, I should perhaps do them no wrong) I know of nothing in the way of Dialogue that deserves to be considered by us with such regard.

THERE are in English THREE Dialogues, and but Three, that are fit to be mentioned on this occasion : all of them excellently well composed in their way, and, it must be owned, by the very best and
politest

politest of our writers. And had that way been the true one, I mean that which antiquity and good criticism recommend to us, the public had never been troubled with this attempt from me, to introduce another.

THE Dialogues I mean are, *The Moralists of Lord SHAFTESBURY; Mr. ADDISON'S Treatise on Medals; and the Minute Philosopher of Bishop BERKELY*: And, where is the modesty, it will be said, to attempt the Dialogue-form, if it has not succeeded in such hands?

THE answer is short, and, I hope, not arrogant. These applauded persons suffered themselves to be misled by modern practice; and, with

with every ability to excel in this nice and difficult composition, have written beneath themselves, only because they did not keep up to the antient standard.

AN essential defect runs through them all. They have taken for their speakers, not real, but *fictitious* characters; contrary to the practice of the old writers; and to the infinite disadvantage of this mode of writing, in every respect.

THE love of truth, they say, is so natural to the human mind that we expect to find the appearance of it, even in our amusements. In some indeed, the slenderest shadow of it will suffice: in others, we require to have the substance

stance presented to us. In all cases, the degree of probability is to be estimated from the nature of the work. Thus, for instance, when a writer undertakes to instruct or entertain us in the way of Dialogue, he obliges himself to keep up to the *idea*, at least, of what he professes. The conversation may not have *really* been such as is represented; but we expect it to have all the *forms* of reality. We bring with us a disposition to be deceived (for we know his purpose is not to recite historically, but to feign probably); but it looks like too great an insult on our understandings, when the writer stands upon no ceremony with us, and refuses to be at the expence of a little art or management to deceive us.

HENCE the probabilities, or, what is called the *decorum*, of this composition. We ask, “Who the persons are, that are going to converse before us :” “Where and when the conversation passed :” And “by what means the company came together.” If we are let into none of these particulars, or, rather if a way be not found to satisfy us in all of them, we take no interest in what remains ; and give the speakers, who in this case are but a sort of Puppets, no more credit, than the opinion we chance to entertain of their Prompter, demands from us.

ON the other hand, when *such* persons are brought into the scene as
are

are known to us, and we have been used to respect, and but so much address employed in shewing them as may give us a colourable pretence to suppose them really conversing together, the writer himself disappears, and is even among the first to fall into his own delusion. For thus CICERO himself represents the matter :

“ THIS way of discourse, says he,
“ which turns on the authority of
“ real persons, and those the most
“ eminent of former times, is, I
“ know not how, more interesting
“ than any other : In so much that
“ in reading my own Dialogue on
“ *old age* I am sometimes ready
“ to conclude, in good earnest, it
b 2 “ is

“ is not I, but CATO himself, who
 “ is there speaking [*b*].”

So complete a deception, as this, requires the hand of a master. But such CICERO was ; and had it been his design to make the highest encomium of his own Dialogues, he could not, perhaps, have done it so well by any other circumstance.

BUT now this advantage is wholly lost by the introduction of *fictitious persons*. These may do in *Comedy*, nay, they do the best there, where *character* only, or chiefly, is

[*b*] Genus hoc sermonum, positum in hominum veterum auctoritate, et eorum illustrium, plus nescio quo pacto videtur habere gravitatis. Itaque ipse mea legens, sic afficior interdum, ut Catonem, non me loqui existimem. CIC. *De Amic.* c. 1.

designed,

designed. In *Dialogue*, we must have real persons, and those only : for character here is but a secondary consideration ; and there is no other way of giving weight and authority to the conversation of the piece.

AND here, again, CICERO may instruct us ; who was so scrupulous on this head that he would not put his discourse on *old age* into the mouth of TITHONUS, although a Greek writer of name had set him the example, *because*, as he observes, *a fabulous person would have had no great authority* [c]. What then would he have said of merely fancied and *ideal* persons, who have

[c] Omnem sermonem tribuimus non Tithono, ut Aristo Chius ; *parum enim esset auctoritatis in fabulâ*. De Senect. c. I,

not so much as that shadowy existence in the plausibility of a current tale, to recommend them?

WHEN I say that *character is but a secondary consideration* in Dialogue, the reader sees I confine myself to that species only, which was in use among the *antients*, properly so called; and of which PLATO and CICERO have left us the best models.

IT is true, in later times, a great wit took upon him to extend the province of Dialogue, and, like another PROMETHEUS [*d*], (as, by an equivocal sort of compliment, it seems, was observed of him) created

[*d*] See the Dialogue entitled, Πρὸς τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα, ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ εἰ ἐν λόγοις.

a new species ; the merit of which consists in associating two things, not naturally allied together, *The severity of philosophic Dialogue, with the humour of the Comic.*

BUT as unnatural as the alliance may seem, this sort of composition has had its admirers. In particular, ERASMUS was so taken with LUCIAN's Dialogue, that he has transfused its highest graces into his own ; and employed those fine arms to better purpose against the Monks, than the forger of them had done, against the Philosophers.

IT must further be confessed, that this innovation of the Greek writer had some countenance from the genius of the old Socratic Dialogue ;

such I mean as it was in the hands of SOCRATES himself [*e*]; who took his name of IRONIST from the continued humour and ridicule, which runs through his moral discourses. But, besides that the Athenian's modest IRONY was of another taste, and better suited to the decorum of conversation, than the Syrian's frontless buffoonery, there was this further difference in the two cases. SOCRATES employed this method of ridicule, as the only one by which he could hope to discredit those mortal foes of reason, the SOPHISTS; LUCIAN, in mere wantonness, to insult its best friends, the PHILOSOPHERS, and even the parent of Phi-

[*e*] Ἐπαιζεν ἄρα ῥηδάζων. Xen. Mem.
l. i. c. 3.

losophy, himself. The Sage would have dropped his IRONY, in the company of the good and wise : The Rhetorician, is never more pleased than in confounding both, by his intemperate SATIRE.

HOWEVER, there was likeness enough in the features of each *manner*, to favour LUCIAN's attempt in compounding his new Dialogue. He was not displeased, one may suppose, to turn the comic art of SOCRATES against himself ; though he could not but know that the ablest masters of the Socratic school employed it sparingly ; and that, when the noble Roman came to philosophize in the way of Dialogue, he disdained to make any use of it, at all,

IN a word, as it was taken up, to serve a turn, so it was very properly laid aside, with the occasion. And even while the occasion lasted, this humorous manner was far enough, as I observed, from being pushed to a Scenic licence ; the great artists in this way knowing very well, that, when SOCRATES brought Philosophy from Heaven to Earth, it was not his purpose to expose her on the stage, but to introduce her into good company.

AND here, to note it by the way, what has been observed of the Ironical manner of the Socratic Dialogue, is equally true of its *subtle questioning dialectic genius*. This, too, had its rise from the circumstance

stances of the time, and the views of its author, who employed it with much propriety and even elegance to entrap, in their own cob-web nets, the minute, quibbling, captious sophists. How it chanced that this part of its character did not, also, cease with its use, but was continued by the successors in that school, and even carried so far as to provoke the ridicule of the wits, till, at length, it brought on the just disgrace of the Socratic Dialogue itself, all this is the proper subject of another inquiry.

OUR concern, at present, is with LUCIAN's Dialogue; whether he were indeed the inventor of this species,

species, or, after SOCRATES, only the espouser of it.

THE account, given above, that *it unites and incorporates the several virtues of the Comic and Philosophic manner*, is in LUCIAN'S own words[f]. Yet his Dialogue does not, as indeed it could not, correspond exactly to this idea. CICERO thought it no easy matter to unite *Philosophy, with Politeness*[g]: What then would he have said of incorporating *Philosophy, with Comic Ridicule*?

To do him justice, LUCIAN himself appears sensible enough of the

[f] Γέλῳα κωμικὸν ὑπὸ Σεμνότητι φιλοσόφῳ.
Περὶ μνηθ. c. 7.

[g] Difficillimam illam societatem Gravitatis cum Humanitate. Leg. l. iii. c. i.
difficulty.

difficulty. *I have presumed*, says he, *to connect and put together two things, not very obsequious to my design, nor disposed by any natural sympathy to bear the society of each other* [b]. And therefore we find him on all occasions more solicitous for the success of this hazardous enterprize, than for the credit of his invention. Every body was ready to acknowledge the novelty of the thing; but he had some reason to doubt with himself, whether it were gazed at as a monster, or admired as a just and reasonable form of composition. So that not

[b] Ἐτολμήσαμεν ἡμεῖς τὰ ἔτις ἔχοντα πρὸς ἀλλήλα ξυνάλαγῃν καὶ ξυναρμόσαι, ἐ πάνυ πειθόμενα, ἐδὲ ὁμαρῶς ἀνεχόμενα τὴν κοινωνίαν. Προμηθ. c. 7.

being

being able to resolve this scruple, to his satisfaction, he extricates himself, as usual, from the perplexity, by the force of his comic humour; and concludes at length, *That he had nothing left for it but to persevere in the choice he had once made*; that is, to preserve the credit of his *own* consistency at least, if he could not prevail to have his Dialogue accepted by the judicious reader, under the idea [*i*] of a consistent *composition*.

THE ingenious writer had, surely, no better way to take, in his distress. For the two excellencies, he meant to incorporate in his Dialogue, cannot, in a supreme degree

[*i*] Προμνηθ. c. 7. to the end. Δις καὶ ἡγορέμενος. c. 33. and Ζεύξις.

of each, subsist together. The one must be sacrificed to the other. Either the philosophic part must give place to the dramatic, or the dramatic must withdraw, or restrain itself at least, to give room for a just display of the philosophic.

AND this, in fact, as I observed, is the case in LUCIAN'S own Dialogues. They are highly dramatic, in which part his force lay; while his Philosophy serves only to edge his wit, or simply to introduce it. They have, usually, for their subject, not, a QUESTION DEBATED; but, a TENET RIDICULED, or, a CHARACTER EXPOSED. In this view, they are doubtless inimitable: I mean when he kept himself, as too frequently he did not, to such

tenets or *characters*, as deserve to be treated in this free manner.

BUT after all, the other species, the *serious, philosophic* Dialogue, is the noblest and the best. It is the *noblest*, in all views; for the dignity of its subject, the gravity of its manner, and the importance of its end. It is the *best*, too; I mean, it excels most in the very truth and art of composition; as it governs itself entirely by the rules of decorum, and gives a just and faithful image of what it would represent: whereas the comic Dialogue, distorting, or, at least, aggravating the features of its original, pleases at some expence of probability; and at length attains its end but in part, for want of *dramatic action*,
the

the only medium, through which *humour* can be perfectly conveyed.

THUS, the serious Dialogue is absolute in itself; and fully obtains its purpose: the humorous or characteristic, but partially; and is, at best, the faint copy of a higher species, the *Comic Drama*.

HOWEVER, the authority of LUCIAN is so great, and the manner itself so taking, that for these reasons, but chiefly for the sake of variety, the FIRST of the following Dialogues (and in part too, the SECOND) pretends to be of this class.

BUT to return to our proper subject, THE SERIOUS OR PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE.

I. I OBSERVED (and the reason now appears) that *character* is a subordinate consideration, in this Dialogue. The *manners* are to be given indeed, but sparingly, and, as it were, by accident. And this grace (which so much embellishes a well composed work) can only be had by employing REAL, KNOWN, and RESPECTED speakers. Each of these circumstances, in the choice of a speaker, is important. The *first*, excites our curiosity: the *second*, affords an easy opportunity of painting the manners by those slight and careless strokes, which alone

alone can be employed for this purpose, and which would not sufficiently mark the characters of unknown or fictitious persons: And the *last*, gives weight and dignity to the whole composition.

By this means, the dialogue becomes, in a high degree, natural and, on that account, affecting: a thousand fine and delicate allusions to the principles, sentiments, and history of the Dialogists keep their characters perpetually in view: we have a rule before us, by which to estimate the pertinence and propriety of what is said: and we are pleased to bear a part, as it were, in the conversation of such persons,

THUS the old writers of Dialogue charm us, even when their subjects are unpleasing and could hardly merit our attention : But when the topics are of general and intimate concern to the reader, by being discussed in this form, they create in him the keenest appetite ; and are, perhaps, read with a higher pleasure, than we receive from most other compositions of literary men.

2. IT being now apprehended what *persons* are most fit to be shewn in Dialogue, the next inquiry will be, concerning their *style or manner of expression*. And this, in general, must be suited to the condition and qualities of the persons themselves : that is, it must

be grave, polite, and something raised above the ordinary pitch or tone of conversation; for, otherwise, it would not agree to the ideas we form of the speakers, or to the regard we owe to *real, known,* and *respected* persons, seriously debating, as the philosophic dialogue imports in the very terms, on some useful or important subject.

THUS far the case is plain enough. The conclusion flows, of itself, from the very idea of a philosophic conversation between such men.

BUT as it appeared that the speaker's *proper manners* are to be given, in this Dialogue, it may be thought (and, I suppose, commonly

ly is thought) that the speaker's *proper style or expression* should be given, too.

HERE the subject begins to be a little nice; and we must distinguish between the *general cast* of expression, and its *smaller and more peculiar features*.

As to the *general cast or manner of speaking*, it may be well to preserve some resemblance of it; for it results so immediately from the speaker's character, and sometimes makes so essential a part of it, that the *manners* themselves cannot, otherwise, be sufficiently expressed.

ACCORDINGLY CICERO tells us, that, in his Dialogues of the *complete*

plete Orator he had *endeavoured to shadow out*, that is, give the outline, as it were, of the kind of eloquence, by which his chief speakers, CRASSUS and ANTONIUS, were severally distinguished [k]. This attention has certainly no ill effect when *the manners of speaking*, as here, are sufficiently distinct, and generally known. It was, besides, essentially necessary in this Dialogue, where the subject is, of eloquence itself; and where the principal persons appeared, and were accordingly to be represented, in the light and character of *speakers*; that is, where their different kinds or manners of speaking were, of course, to be expressed.

[k] — quo in genere orationis utrumque Oratorem cognoveramus, id ipsum sumus in eorum sermone *adumbrare conati*. De Orat. iii. 4.

IN Dialogues on other subjects, CICERO himself either neglects this rule, or observes it with less care: And this difference of conduct is plainly justified, from the reason of the thing.

BUT now when the question is, of the *smaller features and more peculiar qualities of style or expression*, it will be found that the writer of Dialogue is under no obligation, either from the reason of the thing, or the best authorities, to affect a resemblance of that kind.

AUTHORITIES, I think, there are none, or none at least that deserve to be much regarded; though I remember what has been observed of an instance or two of this
fort,

fort, in some of PLATO's Dialogues ; where his purpose is, to *expose a character*, not to *debate a philosophic question*: And for the *impropriety of the thing itself*, it may appear from the following considerations.

IN general, the reason, why *character* is preserved in this Dialogue, is, because such speakers, as are introduced in it, cannot be supposed to converse for any time on a subject of importance without discovering something of their own *peculiar manners* ; though the occasion may not be warming enough to throw them out with that distinctness and vivacity, which we expect in the progress of a dramatic plot. But as to the *language of conversation*,

conversation, it is so much the same between persons of education and politeness, that, whether the subject be interesting, or otherwise, all that you can expect is that the *general cast of expression* will be somewhat tinged by the *manners*, which shine through it; but by no means that the smaller differences, the nicer peculiarities of style, will be shewn.

OR, we may take the matter thus.

THE reason, why the *general cast or kind of expression* is different in two speakers, is, because their *characters* are different, too. But *character* has no manner of influence, in the ease and freedom of conversation,

conversation, on the *idiomatic differences* of expression; which flow not from the *manners*, but from some degree of study and affectation, and only characterize their written and artificial works.

THUS, for instance, if SALLUST and CICERO had come together in conversation, the *former* would certainly have dropped his *new words and pointed sentences*: and the *latter*, his *numerous oratorical periods*. All that might be expected to appear, is, that SALLUST's expression would be shorter and more compact; CICERO's, more gracious and flowing, agreeably to the characters of the two men.

BUT

BUT there is a further reason why these *characteristic peculiarities of style* must not be exhibited, or must be infinitely restrained at least, in the sort of composition we are now considering. It is, that the studied imitation of such peculiarities would be what we call *mimicry*; and would therefore border upon *ridicule*, the thing of all others which the genius of this Dialogue most abhors. In Comedy itself, the most exact writers do not condescend to this minute imitation. TERENCE'S characters, all express themselves, I think, with equal elegance: Even his slaves are made to speak as good Latin, as their masters. In the serious Dialogue, then, which, from its nature is, in a much lower degree, *mimetic*, that
minute

minute attention can by no means be required. It will be sufficient that the speakers express themselves in *the same manner*, that is, (provided the *general cast* of expression be suited to their respective characters) *in the writer's own*.

IF there be any exception from this rule, it must be, when the peculiarities of expression are so great, and so notorious, that the reader could hardly acknowledge the speaker in any other dress, than that of his own style. Hence it is possible, though CICERO has left us no example of this sort, that if, in the next age, any one had thought fit to introduce MÆCENAS into Dialogue, he might perhaps have been allowed to colour his
language

language with some of those *spruce turns and negligent affectations*, by which, as a writer, he was so well known. It is, at least, on this principle that the author of the following Dialogues must rest his apology for having taken such liberty, in *one or two instances, only*: In which, however, he has confined his imitation to the single purpose of exhibiting some degree of likeness to their acknowledged manner of expression, without attempting to expose it in any strong or invidious light. And, after all, if even this liberty, so cautiously taken, be thought too much, he will not complain of his critics; since the fault, if it be one, was committed rather in compliance with what he supposed might be the public judgment, than with his own.

THE

THE reader has now before him a sketch of what I conceive to be the *character* of the antient philosophic Dialogue; which, in one word, may be said to be, “ An
“ imitated, and mannered conversation between certain real,
“ known, and respected persons,
“ on some useful or serious subject,
“ in an elegant, and suitably adorned, but not characteristic style.”

AT least I express, as I can, my notion of CICERO's Dialogue, which unites these several characters; and, by such union, has effected, as it seems to me, all that the nature of this composition requires or admits.

THIS,

THIS, I am sensible, is saying but little, on the subject. But I pretend not to do justice to CICERO'S DIALOGUES; which are occasionally set off by that lively, yet chaste colouring of the *manners*, and are, besides, all over sprinkled with that exquisite grace of, what the Latin writers call, *urbanity* (by which, they meant as well what was most polite in the *air* of conversation, as in the language of it) that there is nothing equal to them, in Antiquity itself: And I have sometimes fancied, that even LIVY'S Dialogues [1], if they had come down to us, would perhaps have lost something, on a com-

[1] Scripsit enim et DIALOGOS, quos non magis philosophiæ annumerare possis, quam HISTORIÆ. SENECA, EP. C.

parifon with thefe mafter-pieces of CICERO's pen.

3. BUT to this apology for the ancient Dialogue, I fufpect, it will be replied, “ That though, in the hands of the Greek and Latin writers, it might, heretofore, have all this grace and merit, yet who fhall pretend to revive it in our days? or, how fhall we enter into the fpirit of this compofition, for which there is no encouragement, nor fo much as the countenance of example in real life? no man writes well, but from his own experience and obfervation: And by whom is the way of dialogue now praftifed? or, where do we find fuch precedents of grave and continued converfation in modern times?”

A VERY competent judge, and one too, who was himself, as I have observed, an adventurer in this class of composition, puts the objection home in the following words.

“ THE truth is, says he, it would
 “ be an abominable falshood, and
 “ belying of the age, to put so
 “ much good sense together in any
 “ *one* conversation, as might make
 “ it hold out steadily, and with
 “ plain coherence, for an hour’s
 “ time, till any *one* subject had been
 “ rationally examined [*m*].”

NOR is this the only difficulty.
Another occurs from the prevailing

[*m*] Lord SHAFTESBURY’s *Moralists*, P. I.
 S. I.

manners

manners of modern times, which are over-run with respect, compliment, and ceremony. “ Now put
 “ *compliments*, says the same writer, put *ceremony* into a Dialogue,
 “ and see what will be the effect!
 “ This is the plain *dilemma* against
 “ that antient manner of writing —
 “ If we avoid ceremony, we are
 “ unnatural : if we use it, and appear
 “ as we naturally are, as we
 “ salute, and meet, and treat one
 “ another, we hate the sight [*n*].”

THESE considerations are to the purpose ; and shew perhaps in a mortifying manner, that the modern writers of Dialogue, the very best of them, cannot aspire to the unrivalled elegance of the antient ;

as being wholly unfurnished of many advantages, to this end, which they enjoyed. But still the *form* of writing itself, is neither impracticable, nor unnatural: And there are certain *means*, by which the disadvantages, complained of, may be lessened at least, if not entirely removed.

To begin with the LAST. It is very true that the constraint of a formal and studied civility is foreign to the genius of this sort of composition, and it is, also, as true that somewhat of this constrained civility is scarce separable from a just copy and faithful picture of conversation in our days. The reason of which is to be gathered from the nature of our policies and govern-

governments. For conversation, I mean the serious and manly sort, as well as eloquence, is most cultivated and thrives best amidst the equality of conditions in republican and popular states.

AND, though this inconvenience be less perceived by us of this free country, than by most others, yet something of it will remain wherever monarchy, with its consequent train of subordinate and dependent ranks of men, subsists.

Now the proper remedy in the case is, To bring such men only together in Dialogue as are of the same rank, or at least to class our speakers with such care as that any great inequality in that respect may
be

be compensated by some other; such as the superiority of age, wisdom, talents, or the like. A Chancellor of *England* and a Country Justice, or even a Lord and his Chaplain, could hardly be shewn in Dialogue without incurring some ridicule. But a Judge and a Bishop, one would hope, might be safely brought together; and if a great Philosopher should enter into debate with a lettered man of Quality, the indecorum would not be so violent as to be much resented.

BUT the influence of modern manners reaches even to names and the ordinary forms of address. In the Greek and Roman Dialogues, it was permitted to accost the greatest persons by their obvious
and

and familiar appellations. **ALCIBIADES** had no more addition, than **SOCRATES** : and **BRUTUS** and **CÆSAR** lost nothing of their dignity from being applied to, in those direct terms. The moderns, on the contrary, have their guards and fences about them ; and we hold it an incivility to approach them without some decent periphrasis, or ceremonial title.

It was principally, I believe, for this reason that modern writers of Dialogue have had recourse to fictitious names and characters, rather than venture on the use of real ones : the *former* absolving them from this cumbersome ceremony, which, in the case of the *latter*, could not so properly be laid aside.

PALÆMON

PALÆMON and PHILANDER, for instance, are not only well-sounding words ; but slide as easily into a sentence, and as gracefully too, as CICERO and ATTICUS : While the *Mr's* and the *Sirs*, nay his *Grace*, his *Excellency*, or his *Honour* [*m*], of modern Dialogue, have not only a formality that hurts the ease of conversation, but a harshness too, which is somewhat offensive to a well-tuned Attic or Roman ear.

ALL this will be allowed ; and yet, to speak plainly and with that freedom which antient manners indulge, the barbarity of these forms is not worse than the pedantry of taking such disgust at them. And

[*n*] *Adv. to an Author*, P. I. towards the end.

there

there are ways, too, by which the most offensive circumstances in this account may be so far qualified as to be almost overlooked, or at least endured. What *these* are, the capable and intelligent reader or writer is not to be told; and none but such would easily apprehend.

To come then to the OTHER objection of Lord SHAFTESBURY, which is more considerable.

It would be a manifest falsehood, he thinks, and directly against the truth both of art and nature, to engage the moderns in a grave discourse of any length. And it is true, the great men of our time do not, like the Senators of antient Rome, spend whole days in learned

debate and formal disputation : Yet their meetings, especially in private parties, with their friends, are not so wholly frivolous, but that they sometimes discourse seriously, and even pursue a subject of learning or business, not with coherence only, but with some care. And will not this be ground enough for a capable writer to go upon, in reviving the way of Dialogue between such men?

BUT, to give the most probable air to his fiction, he may find it necessary to recede from the strict imitation of his originals, in one instance.

IT may be advisable not to take for his speakers, *living persons* ; I mean, persons, however respectable,

ble, of his own age. We may fancy of the dead, what we cannot so readily believe of the living. And thus, by endeavouring a little to deceive ourselves, we may come to think that natural, which is not wholly incredible; and may admit the writer's invention for a picture, though a studied and flattering one, it may be, of real life.

IN short, it may be a good rule in modern Dialogue, as it was in antient Tragedy, to take our subjects, and choose our persons, out of former times. And, under the prejudice of that opinion which is readily entertained of such subjects and characters, an artist may contrive to pass that upon us for *Fact*, which was only ingenious

Fiction; and so wind up his piece to the perfection of antient Dialogue, without departing too widely from the decorum and truth of conversation in modern life.

SUCH at least is the *IDEA*, which the author of these Dialogues has formed to himself of the manner in which this exquisite sort of composition may be attempted by more successful writers. For to conceive an excellence, and to copy it, he understands and laments, are very different things.

DIALOGUE I.

On SINCERITY in the Commerce of the World.

DR. HENRY MORE, EDMUND WALLER, ESQ.

MR. WALLER.

ENOUGH, enough, my friend, on the good old chapter of *Sincerity and Honour*. Your rhetoric, and not your reasoning, is too much for me. Believe it, your fine stoical lessons must all give way to a little common sense, I mean, to a prudent accommodation of ourselves to times and circumstances; which, whether you will dignify it with the name of philosophy, or no, is the only method of living with credit in the world, and even with safety.

DR. MORE.

ACCOMMODATION is, no doubt, a good word to stand in the place of insincerity. But, pray, in which of the great moral masters have you picked up this term, and much more, the virtuous practice, it so well expresses?

MR. WALLER.

I LEARNT it from the great master of life, EXPERIENCE: A doctor, little hear'd of in the schools, but of more authority with men of sense, than all the solemn talkers of the porch, or cloyster, put together.

DR. MORE.

AFTER much reserve, I confess, you begin to express yourself very clearly. But, good Sir, not to take up your conclusion too hastily, have the patience to hear —

MR. WALLER.

HAVE I not, then, hear'd, and sure with patience enough, your studied harangue

rangues on this subject? You have discoursed it, I must own, very plausibly. But the impression, which fine words make, is one thing, and the conviction of reason, another. And, not to waste more time in fruitless altercation, let ME, if you please, read you a lecture of morals: Not, out of antient books, or the visions of an unpractised philosophy, but from the schools of business and real life. Such a view of things will discredit these high notions, and may serve, for the future, to amend and rectify all your systems.

DR. MORE.

COMMEND me to a man of the world, for a rectifier of moral systems! — Yet, if it were only for the pleasure of being let into the secrets of this new doctrine of *Accommodation*, I am content to become a *patient* hearer, in my turn; and the rather, as the day, which, you see, wears apace, will hardly give leave for inter-

ruption, or indeed afford you time enough for the full display of your wit on this extraordinary subject.

MR. WALLER.

WE have day enough before us, for the business in hand. 'Tis true, this wood-land walk has not the charms, which you lately bestowed on a certain *philosophical garden*[a]. But the heavens are as clear, and the air, that blows upon us, as fresh, as in that fine evening which drew your friends abroad, and engaged them in a longer debate, than that with which I am now likely to detain you. For, indeed, I have only to lay before you the result of my own experience and observation. All my arguments are plain facts, which are soon told, and about which there can be no dispute. You shall judge for yourself, how far they

[a] The scene of Dr. MORE's DIVINE DIALOGUES, printed in 1668.

will authorize the conclusion I mean to draw from them.

THE POINT, I am bold enough to maintain against you philosophers is, briefly, this; “ That *sincerity*, or a scrupulous regard to *truth* in all our conversation and behaviour, how specious soever it may be in theory, is a thing impossible in practice; that there is no living in the world on these terms; and that a man of business must either quit the scene, or learn to temper the strictness of your discipline with some reasonable accommodations. It is exactly the dilemma of the poet,

“ Vivere si recte nescis, discede peritis;
“ of all which I presume, as I said, to offer my own experience, as the shortest and most convincing demonstration.”

DR. MORE.

THE subject, I confess, is fairly delivered, and nothing can be juster than

6 DIALOGUES MORAL

this appeal to experience, provided you do not attempt to delude yourself or me, by throwing false colours upon it.

MR. WALLER.

IT will be your business to remonstrate against these arts, if you discover any such. My intention is to proceed in the way of a direct and simple recital.

“ I WAS born, as you know, of a good family, and to the inheritance of this paternal seat [*b*], with the easy fortune that belongs to it. To this, I succeeded but too soon by the untimely loss of an excellent father. His death, however, did not deprive me of those advantages, which are thought to arise from a strict and virtuous education. This care devolved on my mother, a woman of great prudence, who provided for my instruction in letters and every other accom-

[*b*] At BEACONSFIELD in *Bucks*, the supposed scene of the Dialogue.

plishment. I was, of myself, enough inclined to books, and was supposed to have some parts, which deserved cultivation. I was accordingly trained in the study of those writings, which are the admiration of men of elegant minds and refined morals. I was a tolerable master of the languages, in which they are composed; and, I may venture to say, was at least imbued with their notions and principles, if I was not able at that time to catch the spirit of their composition: All which was confirmed in me, by the constant attendance and admonitions of the best tutors, and the strict discipline of your colleges. I mention these things to shew you, that I was not turned loose into the world, as your complaint of men of business generally is, unprincipled and uninstructed; and that what austere men might afterwards take for some degree of libertinism in my conduct, is not to be charged on the want of a sober or even learned education."

DR. MORE.

I UNDERSTAND you mean to take no advantage of that plea, if what follows be not answerable to so high expectations.

MR. WALLER.

THE season was now come, when my rank and fortune, together with the solicitations of my friends, drew me forth, though reluctantly, from the college into the world. I was then, indeed, under twenty: but so practiced in the best things, and so enamoured of the moral lessons which had been taught me, that I carried with me into the last parliament of king JAMES, not the showy accomplishments of learning only, but the high enthusiasm of a warm and active virtue. Yet the vanity, it may be, of a young man, distinguished by some advantages, and conscious enough of them, was, for a time, the leading principle with me. In this disposition, it may be supposed,

posed, I could not be long without desiring an introduction to the court. It was not a school of that virtue I had been used to, yet had some persons in it of eminent worth and honour. A vein of poetry, which seemed to flow naturally from me, was that by which I seemed most ambitious to recommend myself [c]. And occasions quickly offered, for that purpose. But this was a play of ingenuity in which the heart had no share. I made complimentary verses on the great lords and ladies of the court, with as much simplicity and as little meaning as my bows in the drawing room, and thought it a fine thing to be taken notice of, as a wit, in the fashionable circles. In the mean time, the corruptions of a loose disorderly

[c] See his *Works*, where are some pieces of a very early date; though Lord CLARENDON tells us, *he was near thirty years of age, before he was much taken notice of, as a Poet.* Contin. of his Life, P. I. p. 25.

court gave me great scandal. And the abject flatteries, I observed in some of the highest stations and gravest characters, filled me with indignation. As an instance of this, I can never forget the resentment, that fired my young breast at the conversation you have often heard me say I was present at, betwixt the old king, and two of his court prelates [*d*]. And if the prudent and witty turn, the venerable bishop of *Winchester* gave to the discourse, had not attoned, in some measure, for the rank offensive fervility of the *other*, it had been enough to determine me, forthwith, to an implacable hatred of kings and courts for ever.

DR. MORE.

It must be owned the provocation was very gross, and the offence taken at it no more, than a symptom of a generous and manly virtue.

[*d*] Dr. ANDREWS, Bishop of *Winchester*, and Dr. NEAL, Bishop of *Durham*. The story is well known.

MR.

MR. WALLER.

IT left a deep impression on my mind, yet it did not hinder me from appearing at court in the first years of the following reign, when the vanity of a thoughtless muse, rather than any relaxation of my ancient manners, drew from me, again, some occasional panegyrics on greatness; which being presented in verse, I thought would hardly be suspected of flattery.

DR. MORE.

THIS indulgence of a *thoughtless muse* (as you call it) was not without its danger. I am afraid this must pass for the first instance of your sacrificing to
INSINCERITY.

MR. WALLER.

YOUR fears are too hasty. This was still a trial of my wit: and after a few wanton circles, as it were to breath and
exercise

exercise my muse, I drew her in from these amusements to a stricter manage and more severe discipline. The long interval of parliaments now followed; and in this suspension of business I applied myself to every virtuous pursuit that could be likely to improve my mind, or purify my morals. Believe me, I cannot to this day, without pleasure, reflect on the golden hours, I passed in the society of such accomplished men, as FALKLAND, HYDE, and CHILLINGWORTH. And, for my more retired amusements at this place, you will judge of the good account I might render of these, when I add, they were constantly shared with that great prelate, who, now, with so much dignity, fills the throne of *Winchester* [e].

DR. MORE.

THIS enthusiasm of your's is catching, and raises in me an incredible impati-

[e] Dr. GEORGE MORLEY.

ence

ence to come at the triumphs of a virtue, trained and perfected in her best school, the conversation of heroes and sages.

MR. WALLER.

You shall hear. The jealousies, that had alarmed the nation for twelve years, were now to have a vent given them, by the call of the parliament in *April 1640*. As the occasion, on which it met, was in the highest degree interesting, the assembly itself was the most august, that perhaps had ever deliberated on public councils. There was a glow of honour, of liberty, and of virtue in all hearts, in all faces: And yet this fire was tempered with so composed a wisdom, and so sedate a courage, that it seemed a synod of heroes; and, as some would then say of us, could only be matched by a senate of old *Rome* in its age of highest glory. To this parliament I had the honour to be deputed, whither I went
with

with high-erected thoughts, and a heart panting for glory and the true service of my country. The dissolution, which so unhappily followed, served only to increase this ardour. So that, on our next meeting in *November*, I went freely and warmly into the measures of those, who were supposed to mean the best. I voted, I spoke, I impeached [*f*]. In a word, I gave a free scope to those generous thoughts and purposes which had been collecting in me for so many years, and was in the foremost rank of those, whose pulse beat highest for liberty, and who were most active for the interest of the public.

DR. MORE.

THIS was indeed a triumph, the very memory of which warms you to this

[*f*] This alludes to the impeachment of Mr. Justice CRAWLEY, July 6, 1641, for his extrajudicial opinion in the affair of *Ship-money*. Mr. WALLER's speech on this occasion is extant amongst his works.

moment.

moment. So bright a flame was not easily extinguished.

MR. WALLER.

It continued for some time in all its vigour. High as my notions were of public liberty, they did not transport me with that zeal which prevailed on so many others, to act against the just prerogative of the crown, and the ancient constitution. I owe it to the conversation and influence of the excellent society, before mentioned, that neither the spirit, the sense, nor, what is more, the relationship and intimate acquaintance of Mr. HAMPDEN [g], could ever bias me to his deeper designs, or any irreverence of the unhappy king's person. Many things concurred to preserve me in this due mean. The violent tendencies of many councils on the parliament's side; many gracious and important compliances on the king's; the

[g] The famous Mr. HAMPDEN was his uncle.

great

great examples of some who had most authority with good men; and lastly, my own temper, which, in its highest fervours, always inclined to moderation; these and other circumstances kept me from the excesses, on either hand, which so few were able to avoid in that scene of public confusion.

DR. MORE.

THIS moderation carries with it all the marks of a real and confirmed virtue.

MR. WALLER.

I RATHER expected you would have considered it as another *sacrifice to Insincerity*. Such, I remember, was the language of many at that time. The enthusiasts on both sides agreed to stigmatize this temper with the name of *Neutrality*. Yet this treatment did not prevent me, when the war broke out, from taking a course which, I easily foresaw, would tend to increase such suspicions;
for

for now, to open a fresh scene to you, I had assumed, if not new principles, yet new notions of the manner in which good policy required me to exert my old ones. The general virtue, or what had the appearance of it at least, had hitherto made plain dealing an easy and convenient conduct. But things were now changed. The minds of all men were on fire : deep designs were laid, and no practice stuck at that might be proper to advance the execution of them. In this situation of affairs, what could simple honesty do but defeat the purpose and endanger the safety of its master? I now, first, began to reflect that this was a virtue for other times : at least, that not to qualify it, in some sort, was, at such a juncture, not honesty, but imprudence : and when I had once fallen into this train of thinking, it is wonderful how many things occurred to me to justify and recommend it. The humour of acting always on one principle was, I said

to myself, like that of sailing with one wind: whereas the expert mariner wins his way by plying in all directions, as occasions serve, and making the best of all weathers. Then I considered with myself the bad policy, in such a conjuncture, of CATO and BRUTUS, and easily approved in my own mind the more pliant and conciliating method of CICCERO. Those stoics, thought I, ruined themselves and their cause by a too obstinate adherence to their system. The liberal and more enlarged conduct of the academic, who took advantage of all winds, that blew in that time of civil dissension, had a chance, at least, for doing his country better service. Observation, as well as books, furnished me with these reflections. I perceived with what difficulty the Lord FALKLAND's rigid principles, had suffered him to accept an office of the greatest consequence to the public safety [*b*]: and I understood to

[*b*] That of *Secretary of State*. The Lord CLARENDON tells us it was with the utmost difficulty he
what

what an extreme his scruples had carried him in the discharge of it [i]. This, concluded I, can never be the office of virtue in such a world, and in such a period: And then that of the poet, so skilled in the knowledge of life, occurred to me,

persuaded him to accept it. "There were two considerations (says the historian) that made most impression on him; the *one*, lest the world should believe that his own ambition had procured this promotion, and that he had therefore appeared signally in the house to oppose those proceedings, that he might thereby render himself gracious to the court: The *other*, lest the King should expect such a submission and resignation of himself and his own reason and judgment to his commands, as he should never give or pretend to give; for he was so severe an adorer of truth, that he would as easily have given himself leave to steal as to dissemble," &c. B. iv.

[i] The noble historian, before cited, gives us two instances of Lord FALKLAND's scrupulosity. The *one* was, "That he could never bring himself to employ spies, or give any countenance or entertainment to them:" The other, "That he could never allow himself the liberty of opening letters, upon a suspicion that they might contain matter of dangerous consequence." B. viii.

— aut virtus nomen inane est,
 Aut decus et pretium recte petit EXPERIENS vir;
 that is, as I explained it, “ The man of
 a ready and dextrous turn in affairs ; one
 who knows how to take advantage of
 all circumstances, and is not restrained,
 by his bigotry, from varying his conduct,
 as occasions serve, and making, as it were,
experiments in business.”

DR. MORE.

You poets, I suppose, have an exclusive right to explain one another ; or these words might seem to bear a more natural interpretation.

MR. WALLER.

You will understand from this account, which I have opened so particularly to you, on what reasons I was induced to alter my plan, or rather to pursue it with those arts of prudence and address, which the turn of the times had now rendered necessary. The conclusion

sion was, I resolved to pursue steadily the king's, which at the same time was manifestly the nation's interest, and yet to keep fair with the parliament, and the managers on that side; for this appeared the likeliest way of doing him real service. And yet some officious scruples, which forced themselves upon me at first, had like to have fixed me in other measures. In the stream of those, who chose to desert the houses rather than share in the violent counsels that prevailed in them, the general disgust had, also, carried me to withdraw myself. But this start of zeal was soon over. I presently saw, and found means to satisfy the king, that it would be more for his service that I should return to the parliament. I therefore resumed my seat and took leave (to say the truth, it was not denied me by the house, who had their own ends to serve by this indulgence [k]) to

[k] To this purpose my Lord CLARENDON. "He [Mr. W.] spoke, upon all occasions, with great

reason and debate in all points with great freedom. At the same time my affections to the common interest were not suspected; for having no connexion with the court, no body thought of charging me with private views; and not forgetting, besides, to cultivate a good understanding with the persons of chief credit in the house, the plainness I used, could only be taken for what it was, an honest and parliamentary liberty. This situation was, for a time, very favourable to me, for the king's friends regarded me as the champion of their cause; whilst the prudence of my carriage towards the leading members se-

sharpness and freedom; which (now there were so few that used it, and there was no danger of being over-voted) was not restrained; and therefore used as an argument against those, who were gone upon pretence, that they were not suffered to declare their opinion freely in the house; which could not be believed, when all men knew what liberty Mr. WALLER took, and spoke every day with impunity, against the sense and proceedings of the house."

B. vii.

cured

cured me, in a good degree, from their jealousy.

DR. MORE.

YOUR policy, I observe, had now taken a more refined turn. The juncture of affairs might possibly justify this address: but the ground you stood upon was slippery; and I own myself alarmed at what may be the consequence of this solicitous pursuit of popularity.

MR. WALLER.

No exception, I think, can be fairly taken at the methods, by which I pursued it. However, this *popularity* it was, as you rightly divine, which drew upon me all the mischiefs, that followed. For the application of all men disposed to the king's service, was now made to me. I had an opportunity, by this means, of knowing the characters and views of particular persons, and of getting an insight into the true state of the king's

affairs. And these advantages, in the end, drove me on the project, which, on the discovery, came to be called my *Plot*: an event, which, with all its particulars, you understand too well to need any information from me about it.

DR. MORE.

THE story, as it was noised abroad, I am no stranger to: But this being one of those occasions, as they say, in which both your policy and virtue were put to the sharpest trial, it would be much to the purpose, you have in view by this recital, to favour me with your own account of it.

MR. WALLER.

To lead you through all particulars, would not suit with the brevity, you require of me. But something I will say to obviate the misconceptions, you may possibly have entertained of this business [1]. For the plot itself, the utmost

[1] See Lord CLARENDON'S History.

of my design was only to form such a combination among the honest and well-affected of all sorts, as might have weight enough to incline the houses to a peace, and prevent the miseries, that were too certainly to be apprehended from a civil war. It was never in my thoughts to surprize the parliament or city by force, or engage the army in the support and execution of my purpose. But my design in this affair, though the fury of my enemies and the fatal jealousy of the time would not suffer it to be rightly understood, is not that which my friends resented, and which most men were disposed to blame in me. It was my behaviour afterwards, and the obliquity of some means, which I found expedient to my own safety, that exposed me to so rude a storm of censure. It continues, I know, to beat upon me even at this distance. But the injustice hath arisen from the force of vulgar prejudices, and from the want of entering into those enlarged

enlarged principles, on which it was necessary for me to proceed in that juncture.

DR. MORE.

YET the ill success of this plot itself might have shewn you, what the design of acting on these *enlarged principles* was likely to come to. It was an unlucky experiment, this, you had made in the *new* arts of living, and should have been a warning to you, not to proceed in a path which, at the very entrance of it, had involved you in such difficulties.

MR. WALLER.

No, it was not the new path, you object to me, but the good old road of Sincerity, which misled me into those brambles. I, in the simplicity of my heart, thought it my duty to adhere to the injured king's cause, and believed my continuance in parliament the fairest, as well as the likeliest method, that could be taken to support it. Had I
temporized

temporized so far as either to desert my prince, and strike in with the parliament, or, on the other hand, had left the house and gone with the seceders to *Oxford*, either way I had been secure. But resolving, as I did, to hold my principles, and follow my judgment, I fell into those unhappy circumstances, from which all the dexterity, I afterwards assumed, was little enough to deliver me.

DR. MORE.

BUT if your intentions were so pure, and the methods, by which you resolved to prosecute them, so blameless, how happened it that any plot could be worked up of so much danger to your life and person?

MR. WALLER.

THIS was the very thing I was going to explain to you. My intentions towards the parliament were fair and honourable: As I retained my seat there, I could not allow myself in the use of

any but parliamentary methods to promote the cause I had undertaken. And this, as I said, was the whole purpose of the *combination*, which was made the pretence to ruin me: for my unhappy project of a reconciliation, was so inextricably confounded with another of more dangerous tendency, the *commission of array*, sent at that time from *Oxford*, that nothing, I presently saw, could possibly disentangle so perplexed a business, or defeat the malice of my enemies, if I attempted, in the more direct way, to stand on my defence. Presumptions, if not proofs, they had in abundance: the consternation of all men was great; their rage, unrelenting; and the general enthusiasm of the time, outrageous. Consider all this, and see what chance there was for escaping their injustice, if I had restrained myself to the sole use of those means, which you men of the cloyster magnify so much, under I know not what names of *Sincerity* and *Honour*.

And,

And, indeed, this late experience, of what was to be expected from the way of plain-dealing, had determined me, henceforth, to take a different route ; and, since I had drawn these mischiefs on myself by *Sincerity*, to try what a little management could do towards bringing me out of them.

DR. MORE.

It was not, I perceive, without cause, that the subtlety you had begun to have recourse to, filled me with apprehensions. *Sincerity* and Honour, Mr. WALLER, are plain things, and hold no acquaintance with this ingenious casuistry.

MR. WALLER.

WHAT, not in such a situation ? It should seem, then, as if you moralists conceived a man owed nothing to himself : that *self-preservation* was not what God and Nature have made it, the first and most binding of all laws : that a
man's

man's family, not to say his country, have no interest in the life of an innocent and deserving citizen: and, in one word, that *prudence* is but an empty name, though you give it a place among your *cardinal virtues*. All this must be concluded before you reject, as unlawful, the means, I was forced upon, at this season, for my defence: means, I presume to say, so sagely contrived, and, as my very enemies will own, executed so happily, that I cannot to this day reflect on my conduct in that affair, without satisfaction.

DR. MORE.

YET it had some consequences which a man of your generosity would a little startle at.—

MR. WALLER.

I UNDERSTAND you: my friends—
But I shall answer that objection in its place.

LET

LET me at present go on with the particulars of my defence. The occasion, as you see, was distressful to the last degree. To deny or defend myself from the charge was a thing impossible. What remained then but to confess it, and in so frank and ample a manner, as might bespeak the pity or engage the protection of my accusers. I resolved to say nothing but the *truth*; and, if ever the *whole* truth may be spoken, it is, when so alarming an occasion calls for it. Besides, what had others, who might be affected by the discovery, to complain of? I disclaimed no part of the guilt myself: nor could any confession be made, that did not first and chiefly affect me. And if I, who was principal in the contrivance, had the best chance for escaping by such confession, what had they, who were only accomplices, to apprehend from it? Add to this, that the number and credit of the persons, who were charged with having a share

in

in the design, were, of all others, the likeliest considerations to prevail with the houses to drop the further prosecution of it:

WELL, the discovery had great effects. But there was no stopping here. Penitence, as well as confession, is expected from a sinner. I had to do with hypocrites of the worst sort. What fairer weapons then, than hypocrisy and dissimulation? I counterfeited the strongest remorse, and with a life and spirit that disposed all men to believe, and most, to pity me. My tryal was put off in very compassion to my disorder; which, in appearance, was so great, that some suspected my understanding had been affected by it. In this contrivance I had two views; to gain time for my defence, and to keep it off till the fury of my prosecutors was abated. In this interval, indeed, some of my accomplices suffered. But how was it possible for me to apprehend

hend that, when, if any, I myself might expect to have fallen the first victim of their resentment?

DR. MORE.

IF this apology satisfy yourself, I need not interrupt your story with any exceptions.

MR. WALLER.

IT was, in truth, the only thing which afflicted me in the course of this whole business. But time and reflection have reconciled me to what was, in some sense, occasioned, but certainly not intended by me. And it would be a strange morality that should charge a man with the undesigned consequences of his own actions.

DR. MORE.

AND were all the symptoms of a disturbed mind, you made a shew of, then entirely counterfeit?

MR. WALLER.'

As certainly as those of the Roman BRUTUS, who, to tell you the truth, was my example on that occasion. It was the business of both of us to elude the malice of our enemies, and reserve ourselves for the future service of our respective countries.

BUT all I have told you was only a prelude to a further, and still more necessary act of dissimulation. Had the house been left to itself, it might possibly have absolved me on the merits of so large a confession, and so lively a repentance. But I had to do with another class of men, with holy inquisitors of fordid minds, and sour spirits; priestly reformers, whose sense was noise, and religion fanaticism, and that too fermented with the leaven of earthly avarice and ambition. These had great influence both within doors and without, and would
regard

regard what had hitherto passed as nothing, if I went not much further. To these, having begun in so good a train, I was now to address myself. I had studied their humours, and understood to a tittle the arts, that were most proper to gain them.

THE first step to the countenance and good liking of these restorers of primitive parity was, I well knew, the most implicit subjection both of will and understanding. I magnified their gifts, I revered their sanctity. I debased myself with all imaginable humility: I extolled them with the grossest flattery.

HAVING thus succeeded to my wish in drawing the principal of these saints around me, I advanced further: I sought their instruction, solicited their advice, and importuned their ghostly consolation. This brought me into high favour: they regarded me as one, who wished and

deserved to be enlightened: they strove which should impart most of their lights and revelations to me. I besought them to expound, and pray, and preach before me; nay I even preached, and prayed, and expounded before them. I out-canted the best-gifted of them; and out-railed the bitterest of all their decriers of an anti-christian prelacy. In short, it would have moved your laughter or your indignation to observe, how submissively I demeaned myself to these spiritual fathers; how I hung on their words, echoed their coarse sayings, and mimicked their beggarly tones and grimaces.

To compleat the farce, I intreated their acceptance of such returns for their godly instructions, as fortune had enabled me to make them. I prevailed with them to give leave that so unworthy a person might be the instrument of conveying earthly accommodations to
 4 these

these dispensers of heavenly treasures; and it surpasses all belief, with what an avidity they devoured them! It is true, this last was a serious consideration; in all other respects, the whole was a perfect comedy; and of so ridiculous a cast, that, though my situation gave me power of face to carry it off gravely then, I have never reflected on it since without laughter.

DR. MORE.

TRULY, as you describe it, it was no serious scene. But what I admire most is the dexterity of your genius, and the prodigious progress, you had now made in your favourite arts of *accommodation*.

MR. WALLER.

NECESSITY is the best master. Besides, can you blame me for taking more than common pains to outdo these miscreants in their own way, I might say, to excel in an art which surpasses, or at least comprizes in it, the essence of all

true wisdom? The precept of your admired ANTONINUS, as you reminded me to day, is SIMPLIFY YOURSELF [*m*]. That, I think, was the quaint expression. It had shewn his reach and mastery in the trade he professed, much more, if, instead of it, he had preached up, ACCOMMODATE YOURSELF; the grand secret, as long experience has taught me, *bene beateque vivendi*.

ALL matters thus prepared, there was now no hazard in playing my last game. I requested and obtained leave to make my defence before the parliament. I had acquired a knack in speaking, and had drawn on myself more credit, than fine words deserve, by a scenical and specious eloquence. If ever I acquitted myself to my wish, it was on this occasion. I soothed, I flattered, I alarmed: every

[*m*] Ἀπλῶσον σεαυτόν. lib. iv. § 26. which Dr. MORE, in l. ii. c. 3. of his ENCHIRIDION ETHICUM, translates, *simplifica teipsum*.

topic of art, which my youth had learned, every subject of address which experience had suggested, every trick and artifice of popular adulation was exhausted. All men were prepared by the practices of my faintly emissaries to hear me with favour; and, which is the first and last advantage of a speaker, to believe me seriously and conscientiously affected.

IN the end I triumphed; and for a moderate fine obtained leave to shelter myself from the following storm, which almost desolated this unhappy country, by retiring into an exile at that time more desirable, than any employment of those I left behind me.

DR. MORE.

You retired, I think, to *France*, whither, no doubt, you carried with you all those generous thoughts and consolatory reflexions, which refresh the spirit of a

good man under a consciousness of suffering virtue.

MR. WALLER.

WHY not, if *prudence* be a virtue? for what, but certain prudential regards (which in common language and common sense are quite another thing from vicious compliances) have hitherto, as you have seen, appeared in my conduct? But be they what they will, they had a very natural effect, and one which will always attend on so reasonable a way of proceeding. For, since you press me so much, I shall take leave to suggest an observation to you, more obvious as well as more candid than any you seem inclined to make on the circumstances of this long relation. It is "that the *pretended* penitence for my past life, and the readiness I shewed to acquiesce in the *false* accounts which the parliament gave of my plot, saved my life, and procured my liberty; whilst the *real and true*

true discoveries I made, to gain credit to *both*, hurt my reputation." But such a reflexion might have shocked your system too much. For it shews that all the benefit, I drew to myself in this affair, arose from those *prudential maxims* you condemn, and that all the injury, I suffered, was owing to the *sincerity* I still mixed with them.

DR. MORE.

SERIOUSLY, Sir, ———

MR. WALLER.

I CAN guess what you would say: but you promised to hear me out, without interruption.

WHAT remains I shall dispatch in few words, having so fully vindicated the most obnoxious part of my life and opened the general principles, I acted upon, so clearly.

I WENT, as you said, to *France*; where, instead of the churlish humour of a male-

a male-content, or the unmanly dejection of a disgraced exile, I appeared with an ease and gayety of mind, which made me welcome to the greatest men of that country. The ruling principle of my philosophy was to make the best of every situation. And, as my fortune enabled me to do it, I lived with hospitality, and even splendor; and indulged myself in all the delights of an enlarged and elegant conversation.

SUCH were my amusements for some years; during which time, however, I preserved the notions of loyalty, which had occasioned my disgrace, and waited some happier turn of affairs, that might restore me with honour to my country. But when all hopes of this sort were at an end, and the government, after the various revolutions which are well known, seemed fixed and established in the person of one man, it was not allegiance, but obstinacy to hold out any longer.

I easily

I easily succeeded in my application to be recalled, and was even admitted to a share in the confidence of the PROTECTOR. This great man was not without a sensibility of true glory; and, for that reason, was even ambitious of the honour, which wit and genius are ever ready to confer on illustrious greatness. Every muse of that time distinguished, and was distinguished by, him. Mine had improved her voice and accent in a foreign country: and what nobler occasion to try her happiest strain than this, of immortalizing a Hero?

“ Illustrious acts high raptures do infuse,

“ And ev’ry conqueror creates a muse;”

as I then said in a panegyric, which my gratitude prompted me to present to him [*n*].

DR. MORE.

THIS panegyric, presented in verse, could hardly, I suppose, be suspected of flattery.

[*n*] In the year 1654.

MR.

MR. WALLER.

I EXPECTED this; but the occasion, as I said, might have suggested a fairer interpretation. And why impute as a fault to me, what the reverend SPRAT, as well as DRYDEN, did not disdain to countenance by their examples? Besides, as an argument of the unfulfilled purity of my intention, you might remember, methinks, that I asked no recompence, and accepted none for the willing honours my muse paid him.

DR. MORE.

IT must be a sordid muse indeed, that submits to a venal prostitution. And, to do your profession justice, it is not so much avarice, or even ambition, as a certain gentler passion, the vanity, shall I call it, of being well with the *great*, that is fatal to you poets.

MR.

MR. WALLER.

I CAN allow for the satyr of this reproof, in a man of antient and bookish manners. But, to shew my disinterestedness still more, you may recollect, if you please, that I embalmed his memory, when neither his favour nor his smile were to be apprehended.

DR. MORE.

IN the short reign of his son.—But what then, you made amends for all, by the congratulation on the happy return of his present majesty. You know who it was that some body complimented in these lines :

“ He best can turn, enforce and soften things,
“ To praise great conquerors and flatter kings.”

MR. WALLER.

WAS it for me to stem the torrent of a nation's joys by a froward and unseasonable silence? Did not HORACE who
fought

fought at *Philippi*, do as much for AUGUSTUS? And should I, who had suffered for his cause, not embrace the goodness, and salute the returning fortunes of so gracious, so accomplished a master? His majesty himself, as I truly say of him, in the poem you object to me,

“ with wisdom fraught
 “ Not such as books, but such as practice
 “ taught,”

did me the justice to understand my address after another manner. He, who had so often been forced by the necessities of his affairs to make compliances with the time, never resented it from me, a private man and a poet, that I had made some sacrifices of a like nature. All this might convince you of the great truth I meant to inculcate by this long recital, that not a fullen and inflexible *Sincerity*, but a fair and seasonable *accommodation of one's self*, to the various exigencies of the times, is the golden virtue that ought to predominate in a man
 of

of life and business. All the rest, believe me, is the very cant of philosophy and unexperienced wisdom.

DR. MORE.

Wisdom—and must the sanctity of that name—

MR. WALLER.

HEAR me, sir—No exclamations against the evidence of plain fact. I have a right to expect another conduct from him, who is grown grey in the studies of moral science.

DR. MORE.

You learned another lesson in the school of FAULKLAND, HYDE, and CHILLINGWORTH.

MR. WALLER.

YES, one I was obliged to unlearn. But, since you remind me of that school, what was the effect of adhering pertinaciously to its false maxims? To what purpose

purpose were the lives of *two* of them prodigally thrown away; and the honour, the wisdom, the talents of the *other*, still left to languish in banishment [o] and obscurity?

DR. MORE.

O! PROPHANE not the glories of immortal, though successful virtue, with such reproaches.—Those adored names shall preach honour to future ages, and enthrone the majesty of virtue in the hearts of men, when wit and parts, and eloquence, and poetry, have not a leaf of all their withered bays to recommend them.

MR. WALLER.

RAPTURES and Chimæras—Rather judge of the sentiments of future ages, from the present. Where is the man, I speak it without boasting, that enjoys a fairer fame; who is better received in all places; who is more listened to in

[o] Lord CLARENDON died in 1674.

all companies; who reaps the fruits of a reasonable and practicable virtue in every return of honour, more unquestionably, than he whose life and principles your outrageous virtue leads you to undervalue so unworthily? And take it from me as an oracle, which long age and experience enable me to deliver with all assurance, “Whoever, in succeeding times, shall form himself on the plan here given, shall meet with the safety, credit, applause, and, if he chuses, honour and fortune in the world, which may be promised indeed, but never will be obtained by any other method.”

DR. MORE.

You have spoken. But hear me now, I conjure you, whilst a poor despised philosopher —

MR. WALLER.

O! I HAVE marked the emotion this discourse of mine hath awakened in you.

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I have seen your impatience: I have watched your eyes, when they sparkled defiance and contradiction to my argument. But your warmth makes you forget yourself. I gave a patient hearing to all your eloquence could suggest in this cause. I even favoured your zeal, and helped to blow up your enthusiasm. The rest fell to my turn; and besides, the evening, as you see, shuts in upon us. Let us escape, at least, from it's dews, which in this decline of the year, they say, are not the most wholesome, into a warm apartment within doors; and then I shall not be averse, especially when you have taken a few minutes to recollect yourself, to debate with you what further remains upon this argument [*p*].

[*p*] The character of Mr. WALLER is given at large in the *Life of Lord Clarendon*, P. I. p. 25.—As for Dr. MORE, Bishop BURNET tell us, in one word, “That he was an open-hearted and sincere “Christian philosopher.” *Hist. of his own time*, vol. i. p. 273. 12^{mo}. Edinb. 1753.

DIALOGUE II.

On RETIREMENT.

MR. ABRAHAM COWLEY — THE
REV. MR. SPRAT.

To the Earl of St. ALBANS [*a*].

MY LORD,

THE duty I owe your LORDSHIP,
as well as my friendship for Mr.
COWLEY, determined me to lose no time
in executing the commission you was

[*a*] This Dialogue is founded on a short passage
in Mr. SPRAT's Life of Mr. COWLEY, in which he
observes, "That in his long dependance on my
Lord ST. ALBANS, there never happened any man-
ner of difference between them; except a little at
LAST, because he would leave his service."

pleased to charge me with by Mr. D****. I went early the next morning to *Barn-Elms* [b]; intending to pass the whole day with him, and to try if what I might be able to suggest on the occasion, together with the weight of your lordship's advice, could not divert him from his strange project of *Retirement*. Your Lordship, no doubt, as all his other friends, had observed his bias that way to be very strong; but who, that knew his great sense, could have thought of its carrying him to so extravagant a resolution? For my own part, I suspected it so little, that, though he would often talk of retiring, and especially since your lordship's favour to him [c], I considered it only as the usual language of poets, which they take up one after another,

[b] A small village on the *Thames*, which was Mr. COWLEY's first retreat, before he removed to *Chertsea*.

[c] Meaning an estate he had obtained by means of this Lord. This particular is several times referred to in the course of the Dialogue.

and

and love to indulge in, as what they suppose becomes their family and profession. It could never come into my thoughts, that one, who knew the world so well as Mr. COWLEY, and had lived so long in it, who had so fair hopes and so noble a patron, could seriously think of quitting the scene at his years, and all for so fantastic a purpose as that of growing old in the corner of a country village.

THESE, my lord, were my sentiments, when your friendly message alarmed me with the apprehension of there being more in the matter, than I had suspected. Yet still I considered it only as a hasty thought, which a fit of the spleen, or of the muse, it may be, had raised; and which the free remonstrance of a friend would easily disperse, or prevent at least from coming to any fixed and settled resolution. But how shall I express to your lordship the surprize I was in to find that this resolution was not only

taken, but rooted so deeply in him, that no arguments, nor even your lordship's authority, could shake it? I have ever admired Mr. COWLEY, as a man of the happiest temper and truest judgment; but, to say the least, there was something so particular, I had almost said perverse, in what he had to alledge for himself on this occasion, that I cannot think I acquit myself to your lordship, without laying before you the whole of this extraordinary conversation; and, as far as my recollection will serve, in the very words in which it passed betwixt us.

I WENT, as I told your lordship, pretty early to *Barn-Elms*; but my friend had gotten the start of me by some hours. He was busying himself with some improvements of his garden, and the fields that lie about his house. The whole circuit of his domain was not so large, but that I presently came up with him. "My dear friend, said he, embracing me, but
with

with a look of some reserve and disgust, and is it you then I have the happiness to see, at length, in my new settlement? Though I fled hither from the rest of the world, I had no design to get out of the reach of my friends. And to be plain with you, I took it a little amiss from one, whose entire affection I had reckoned upon, that he should leave me to myself for these two whole months, without discovering an inclination, either from friendship or curiosity, to know how this retirement agreed with me. What could induce my best friend to use me so unkindly?"

SURELY, said I, you forget the suddenness of your flight, and the secrecy with which the resolution was taken. We supposed you gone only for a few days, to see to the management of your affairs, and could not dream of your *rusticating* thus long, at a time when the town and court are so busy; when the occasions of your friends and your own

interests seemed to require your speedy return to us. However, continued I, it doth not displease me to find you so dissatisfied with this solitude. It looks as if the short experience, you have had of this recluse life, did not recommend it to you in the manner, you expected. Retirement is a fine thing in imagination, and is apt to possess you poets with strange visions. But the charm is rarely lasting; and a short trial, I find, hath served to correct these fancies. You feel yourself born for society and the world, and, by your kind complaints of your friend, confess how unnatural it is to deny yourself the proper delights of a man, the delights of conversation.

Not so fast, interrupted he, if you please, in your conclusions about the nature of retirement. I never meant to give up my right in the affections of those few, I call my friends. But what has this to do with the general purpose of retreating

retreating from the anxieties of business, the intrigues of policy, or the impertinencies of conversation? I have lived but too long in a ceaseless round of these follies. The best part of my time hath been spent *sub dio*. I have served in all weathers, and in all climates, but chiefly in the torrid zone of politics, where the passions of all men are on fire, and where such as have lived the longest, and are thought the happiest, are scarcely able to reconcile themselves to the sultry air of the place. But this warfare is now happily at an end. I have languished these many years for the shade. Thanks to my Lord St. ALBANS, and another noble lord you know of, I have now gained it. And it is not a small matter, I assure you, shall force me out of this shelter.

NOTHING is easier, said I, than for you men of wit to throw a ridicule upon any thing. It is but applying a quaint figure, or a well-turned sentence, and the

the business is done. But indeed, my best friend, it gives me pain to find you not so much diverting, as deceiving yourself with this unseasonable ingenuity. So long as these fallies of fancy were employed only to enliven conversation, or furnish matter for an ode or an epigram, all was very well. But now that you seem disposed to *act* upon them, you must excuse me if I take the matter a little more seriously. To deal plainly with you, I come to tell you my whole mind on this subject: and to give what I have to say the greater consequence with you, I must not conceal from you, that I come commissioned by the excellent lord you honour so much, and have just now mentioned, to expostulate in the freest manner with you upon it.

WE had continued walking all this time, and were now ascending a sort of natural terras. It led to a small thicket, in the entrance of which was a seat that
 commanded

commanded a pleasant view of the country, and the river. Taking me up to it, "Well, said he, my good friend, since your purpose in coming hither is so kind, and my Lord St. ALBANS himself doth me the honour to think my private concerns deserving his particular notice, it becomes me to receive your message with respect, and to debate the matter, since you press it so home upon me, with all possible calmness. But let us, if you please, sit down here. You will find it the most agreeable spot I have to treat you with; and the shade we have about us, will not, I suppose, at this hour be unwelcome."

AND now, turning himself to me, "Let me hear from you, what there is in my retreat to this place, which a wise man can have reason to censure, or which may deserve the disallowance of a friend. I know you come prepared with every argument which men of the world have

at any time employed against retirement; and I know your ability to give to each its full force. But look upon this scene before you, and tell me what inducements I can possibly have to quit it for any thing you can promise me in exchange? Is there in that vast labyrinth, you call the world, where so many thousands lose themselves in endless wandrings and perplexities, any corner where the mind can recollect itself so perfectly, where it can attend to its own business, and pursue its proper interests so conveniently, as in this quiet and sequestered spot? Here the passions subside, or, if they continue to agitate, do not however transport the mind with those feverish and vexatious fervours, which distract us in public life. This is the seat of virtue and of reason; here I can fashion my life by the precepts of duty and conscience; and here I have leisure to make acquaintance, that acquaintance

quaintance which elfewhere is fo rarely made, with the ways and works of God.

THINK again, my friend. Doth not the genius of the place feize you? Do you not perceive a certain ferenity steal in upon you? Doth not the afpect of things around you, the very ftillnefs of this retreat, infufe a content and fatisfaction, which the world knows nothing of? Tell me, in a word, is there not something like enchantment about us? Do you not find your defires more compofed, your purpofes more pure, your thoughts more elevated, and more active, fince your entrance into this fcene?"

HE was proceeding in this ftain with an air of perfect enthufiafm, when I broke in upon him with asking, "Whether this was what he called *debating the matter calmly with me*. Surely, faid I, this is poetry, or something ftill more extravagant. You cannot think I come prepared

prepared to encounter you in this way. I own myself no match for you at these weapons: which indeed are too fine for my handling, and very unfuitable to my purpose, if they were not. The point is not which of us can say the handsomest things, but the truest, on either side of the question. It is, as you said, plain argument, and not rhetorical flourishes, much less poetical raptures, that must decide the matter in debate. Not but a great deal might be said on my side, and, it may be, with more colour of truth, had I the command of an eloquence proper to set it off.

I MIGHT ask, in my turn, “Where is the mighty charm that draws you to this inglorious solitude, from the duties of business and conversation, from the proper end and employment of man? How comes it to pass, that this stillness of a country landscape, this uninstruſting, though agreeable enough scene of fields
and

and waters, should have greater beauty in your eye, than *flourishing peopled towns*, the scenes of industry and art, of public wealth and happiness? Is not the *sublime countenance* of man, so one of your acquaintance terms it, a more delightful, object than any of these humble beauties that lie before us? And are not the human virtues, with all their train of lovely and beneficial effects in society, better worth contemplating, than the products of inanimate nature in the field or wood? Where should we seek for REASON, but in the minds of men tried and polished in the school of civil conversation? And where hath VIRTUE so much as a being out of the offices of social life? Look well into yourself, I might say: hath not indeed the proper genius of solitude affected you? Doth not I know not what of chagrin and discontent hang about you? Is there not a gloom upon your mind, which darkens your views of human nature, and damps
 I those

those chearful thoughts and sprightly purposes, which friendship and society inspire?"

You see, Sir, were I but disposed, and as able as you are, to pursue this way of fancy and declamation, I might conjure up as many frightful forms in these retired walks, as you have delightful ones. And the enchantment in good hands would, I am persuaded, have more the appearance of reality. But this is not the way in which I take upon myself to contend with you. I would hear, if you please, what reasons, that deserve to be so called, could determine you to so strange, and forgive me, if at present I am forced to think it, so unreasonable a project, as that of devoting your health and years to this monastic retirement. I would lay before you the arguments, which, I presume, should move you to quit a hasty; perhaps an unweighed resolution; so improper in itself, so alarming

to all your friends, so injurious to your own interest, and, permit me to say, to the public. I would enforce all this with the mild persuasions of a friend; and with the wisdom, the authority of a great person, to whose opinion you owe a deference, and who deserves it too from the entire love and affection he bears you."

My dearest friend, replied he, with an earnestness that awed, and a goodness that melted me, I am not to learn the affection which either you or my noble friend bear me. I have had too many proofs of it from both to suffer me to doubt it. But why will you not allow me to judge of what is proper to constitute my own happiness? And why must I be denied the privilege of choosing for myself, in a matter where the different taste or humour of others makes them so unfit to prescribe to me? Yet I submit to these unequal terms; and if I cannot

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justify the choice I have made, even in the way of serious reason and argument, I promise to yield myself to your advice and authority. You have taken me perhaps a little unprepared and unfurnished for this conflict. I have not marshalled my forces in form, as you seem to have done; and it may be difficult, on the sudden, to methodize my thoughts in the manner you may possibly expect from me. But come, said he, I will do my best in this emergency. You will excuse the rapture which hurried me, at setting out, beyond the bounds which your severer temper requires. The subject always fires me; and I find it difficult, in entering on this argument, to restrain those triumphant fallies, which had better been reserved for the close of it.

HERE he paused a little; and recollecting himself, "But first, resumed he, you will take notice, that I am not at all concerned in the general question, so much,

much, and, I think, so vainly agitated, “*whether a life of retirement be preferable to one of action?*” I am not, I assure you, for unpeopling our cities, and sending their industrious and useful inhabitants into woods and cloysters. I acknowledge and admire the improvements of arts, the conveniencies of society, the policies of government [d]. I have no thought so mad or so silly, as that of wishing to see the tribes of mankind disbanded, their interests and connexions dissolved, and themselves turned loose into a single and solitary existence. I would not even wish to see our courts deserted of their homagers, though I cannot but

[d] The writer of the Dialogue has thought fit to soften the misanthropy of Mr. COWLEY in this instance. In one of his Essays he talks strangely. “It is the great boast, says he, of eloquence and philosophy, that they first congregated men dispersed, united them into cities, and built up the houses and the walls of cities. I wish they could unravel all they had woven, that we might have our woods and our innocence again, instead of our castles and our policies.”

be of opinion, that an airing now and then at their country-houses, and that not with the view of diverting, but recollecting themselves, would prove as useful to their sense and virtue, as to their estates. But all this, as I said, is so far from coming into the scheme of my serious wishes, that it does not so much as enter into my thoughts. Let wealth and power, and pleasure, be as eagerly sought after, as they ever will be: let thousands or millions assemble in vast towns, for the sake of pursuing their several ends, as it may chance, of profit, vanity, or amusement. All this is nothing to me, who pretend not to determine for other men, but to vindicate my own choice of this retirement.

As much as I have been involved in the engagements of business, I have not lived thus long without looking frequently, and sometimes attentively into myself. I maintain, then, that to a person so moulded

moulded as I am, of the *temper and turn of mind*, which Nature hath given me; of *the sort of talents*, with which education or genius hath furnished me; and lastly, of the *circumstances*, in which fortune hath placed me; I say, to a person so charactered and so situated, RETIREMENT is not only his choice, but his duty; is not only what his inclination leads him to, but his judgment. And upon these grounds, if you will, I venture to undertake my own apology to you.

YOUR proposal, said I, is fair, and I can have no objection to close with you upon these terms; only you must take care, my friend, that you do not mistake or misrepresent your own talents or character; a miscarriage, which, allow me to say, is not very rare from the partialities which an indulged humour, too easily taken for nature, is apt to create in us.

OR what, replied he, if this humour, as you call it, be so rooted as to become a *second* nature? Can it, in the instance before us, be worth the pains of correcting?

I SHOULD think so, returned I, in your case. But let me first hear the judgment you form of yourself, before I trouble you with that which I and your other friends make of you.

I CANNOT but think, resumed he, that my situation at present must appear very ridiculous. I am forced into an *apology* for my own conduct, in a very nice affair, which it might become another, rather than myself, to make for me. In order to this I am constrained to reveal to you the very secrets, that is, the foibles and ~~weaknesses~~ of my own heart. I am to lay myself open and naked before you. This would be an unwelcome talk to most men.

men. But your friendship, and the confidence I have in your affection, prevail over all scruples. Hitherto your friend hath used the common privilege of wearing a disguise, of masking himself, as the poet makes his hero, in a *cloud*, which is of use to keep off the too near and curious inspection both of friends and enemies. But, at your bidding, it falls off, and you are now to see him in his just proportion and true features.

My best friend, proceeded he with an air of earnestness and recollection, it is now above forty years that I have lived in this world; and in all the rational part of that time there hath not, I believe, a single day past without an ardent longing for such a retreat from it, as you see me at length blessed with. You have heard me repeat some verses, which were made by me so early as the age of *thirteen*, and in which that inclination is expressed as strongly, as in any thing I

F 4

have

have ever said or written on that subject [e]. Hence you may guess the proper turn and bias of my nature; which began so soon, and hath continued thus long, to show itself in the constant workings of that passion.

EVEN in my earliest years at school, you will hardly imagine how uneasy constraint of every kind was to me, and with what delight I broke away from the customary sports and pastimes of that age, to saunter the time away by myself, or with a companion, if I could meet with any such, of my own humour? The same inclination pursued me to college; where a private walk, with a book or friend, was beyond any amusement, which, in that sprightly season of life, I had any acquaintance with. It is with a fond indulgence my memory even now returns to these past pleasures. It was in those

[e] These verses are inserted in one of his *Essays*, and in some editions of his works.

retired ramblings that a thousand charming perceptions and bright ideas would stream in upon me. The muse was kindest in those hours: and I know not how, Philosophy herself would *oftner* meet me amidst the willows of the CAM, than in the formal schools of science, within the walls of my college, or in my tutor's chamber.

I UNDERSTAND, said I, the true secret of that matter. You had now contracted an intimacy with the poets, and others of the fanciful tribe. You was even admitted of their company; and it was but fit you should adopt their sentiments, and speak their language. Hence those day-dreams of *shade and silence*, and I know not what visions which transport the minds of young men, on their entrance into these regions of *Parnassus*.

IT should seem then, returned he, by your way of expressing it, as if you
thought

thought this passion for *shade and silence* was only pretended to on a principle of *fashion*; or, at most, was caught by the lovers of poetry from each other, in the way of *sympathy*, without nature's having any hand at all in the production of it.

SOMETHING like that, I told him, was my real sentiment; and that these agreeable reveries of the old poets had done much hurt by being taken too seriously. Were HORACE and VIRGIL, think you, as much in earnest as you appear to be, when they were crying out perpetually on their favourite theme of *otium* and *secessus*, "they, who lived and died in a court?"

I BELIEVE, said he, they were, and that the short accounts we have of their lives shew it, though a perfect dismissal from the court was what they could not obtain, or had not the resolution to insist upon. But pray, upon your principles, that all
this

this is but the enchantment of *example* or *fashion*, how came it to pass, that the first seducers of the family, the old poets themselves, had fallen into these notions? They were surely no pretenders. They could only write from the heart; and methinks it were more candid, as well as more reasonable, to account for this passion, which hath so constantly shewn itself in their successors, from the same reason. It is likely indeed, and so much I can readily allow, that the early reading of the poets might contribute something to confirm and strengthen my natural bias [*f*].

BUT let the matter rest for the present. I would now go on with the detail of my own life and experience, so

[*f*] "Perhaps, says he, (speaking of the poets) it was the immature and immoderate love of them, which stamp'd first, or rather engraved the characters in me: they were like letters cut in the bark of a young tree, which with the tree still grow proportionably." [*Essay on himself.*]

proper

proper, as I think, to convince you that what I am pleading for is the result of nature.

I was saying how agreeably my youth passed in these reveries, if you will have it so, and especially *inter sylvas academi*:

Dura sed emovere loco me tempora grato,
Civilisque rudem belli tulit æstus in arma.

You know the consequence. This civil turmoil drove me from the shelter of retirement into the heat and bustle of life; from those studies which, as you say, had enchanted my youth, into business and action of all sorts. I lived in the world: I conversed familiarly with the great. A change like this, one would suppose, were enough to undo the prejudices of education. But the very reverse happened. The further I engaged, and the longer I continued in this scene, the greater my impatience was of retiring from it.

BUT

BUT you will say, my old vice was nourished in me by living in the neighbourhood of books and letters [g]. I was yet in the fairy land of the Muses; and, under these circumstances, it was no wonder that neither arms nor business, nor a court, could prevent the mind from returning to its old bias. All this may be true. And yet, I think, if that court had contained many such persons as some I knew in it, neither the distractions of business on the one hand, nor the blandishments of the Muse on the other, could have disposed me to leave it. But there were few LORD FALKLANDS—And unhappily my admiration of that nobleman's worth and honour [h] created

[g] "When the civil war broke out, his [Mr. GOWLEY's] affection to the king's cause drew him to *Oxford*, as soon as it began to be the chief seat of the royal party." [Dr. SPRAT's life of him.]

[h] Dr. SPRAT tells us in *his life*, "That during his residence at *Oxford*, he had the entire friendship
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an invincible aversion to the rest, who had little resemblance of his virtues.

I WOULD not be thought, said I, to detract from so accomplished a character as that of the Lord FALKLAND; but surely there was something in his notions of honour —

Not a word, interrupted he eagerly, that may but seem to throw a shade on a virtue the brightest and purest that hath done honour to these later ages. — But I turn from a subject that interests me too much, and would lead me too far. Whatever attractions there might be in

of my Lord FALKLAND, one of the principal secretaries of state. That affection was contracted by the agreement of their learning and manners. For you may remember, Sir, [addressing himself to Mr. M. CLIFFORD] we have often heard Mr. COWLEY admire him, not only for the profoundness of his knowledge, which was applauded by all the world, but more especially for those qualities which he himself more regarded, for *his generosity of mind, and his neglect of the vain pomp of human greatness.*"

such

such a place, and in such *friendships*, the iniquity of the times soon forced me from them. Yet I had the less reason to complain, as my next removal was into the family of so beneficent a patron as the Lord JERMYN, and into the court of so accomplished a princess, as the QUEEN MOTHER.

My residence, you know, was now for many years in *France*; a country, which picques itself on all the refinements of civility. Here the world was to appear to me in its fairest form, and, it was not doubted, would put on all its charms to wean me from the love of a studious retired life. I will not say I was disappointed in this expectation. All that the elegance of polished manners could contribute to make society attractive, was to be found in this new scene. My situation, besides, was such, that I came to have a sort of familiarity with greatness. Yet shall I confess my inmost sentiments

I of

of this splendid life to you? I found it empty, fallacious, and even disgusting. The outside indeed was fair. But to me, who had an opportunity of looking it through, nothing could be more deformed and hateful. All was ambition, intrigue, and falshood. Every one intent on his own schemes, frequently wicked, always base and selfish. Great professions of honour, of friendship, and of duty; but all ending in low views and sordid practices. No truth, no sincerity; without which conversation is but words; and the polish of manners, the idlest foppery.

SURELY, interposed I, this picture must be overcharged. Frailties and imperfections, no doubt, there will be in all societies of men, especially where there is room for competition in their pursuits of honour and interest. But your idea of a court is that of a den of thieves, only better dressed, and more civilized.

THAT

THAT however, said he, is the idea under which truth obliges me to represent it. Believe me, I have been long enough acquainted with that country, to give you a pretty exact account of its inhabitants. Their sole business is to follow the humour of the prince, or of his favourite, to speak the current language, to serve the present turn, and to cozen one another. In short, their virtue is, civility; and their sense, cunning. You will guess now, continued he, how uneasy I must be in such company; I, who cannot lie, though it were to make a friend, or ruin an enemy; who have been taught to bear no respect to any but true wisdom; and, whether it be nature or education, could never endure (pardon the foolish boast) that hypocrisy should usurp the honours, and triumph in the spoils of virtue.

NAY further, my good friend, (for I must tell you all I know of myself, though it expose me ever so much to the charge of folly, or even vanity) I was not born for courts and general conversation. Besides the unconquerable aversion I have to knaves and fools, (though these last, but that they are commonly knaves too, I could bring myself to tolerate): besides this uncourtly humour, I have another of so odd a kind, that I almost want words to express myself intelligibly to you. It is a sort of capricious delicacy, which occasions a wide difference in my estimation of those characters, in which the world makes no distinction. It is not enough to make me converse with ease and pleasure with a man, that I see no notorious vices, or even observe some considerable virtues in him. His good qualities must have a certain grace, and even his sense must be of a certain

tain

tain turn, to give me a relish of his conversation.

I SEE you smile at this talk, and am aware how fantastic this squeamishness must appear to you. But it is with men and manners, as with the forms and aspects of natural things. A thousand objects recal ideas, and excite sensations in my mind, which seem to be not perceived, or not heeded by other men. The look of a country, the very shading of a landscape, shall have a sensible effect on me, which they, who have as good eyes, appear to make no account of. It is just the same with the characters of men. I conceive a disgust at some, and a secret regard for others, whom many, I believe, would estimate just alike. And what is worse, a long and general conversation hath not been able to cure me of this foible. I question, said he, turning himself to me, but, if I was called upon to assign the reasons of that entire af-

G 2

fection,

fection, which knits me to my best friend, they would be resolved at last into a something, which they, who love him perhaps as well, would have no idea of.

HE said this in a way that disarmed me, or I had it in my mind to have rallied him on his doctrine of *occult qualities* and *unintelligible* forms. I therefore contented myself with saying, that I must not hear him go on at this strange rate; and asked him if it was possible he could suffer himself to be biassed, in an affair of this moment, by such whimsies?

THOSE whimsies, resumed he, had a real effect. But consider further, the endless impertinencies of conversation; the dissipation, and loss of time; the diversion of the mind from all that is truly useful or instructive, from what a reasonable man would or should delight in: add to these, the vexations of business; the slavery of dependence, the discourtesies

tesies of some, the grosser injuries of others; the danger, or the scorn to which virtue is continually subject; in short, the knavery, or folly, or malevolence of all around you; and tell me, if any thing but the unhappy times, and a sense of duty, could have detained a man of my temper and principles so long in a station of life, so very uneasy and disgusting to me.

NOTHING is easier, said I, than to exaggerate the inconveniencies of any situation. The world and the court have doubtless theirs. But you seem to forget one particular; that the *unhappy times* you speak of, and the state of the court, were an excuse for part of the disagreeable circumstances you have mentioned. The face of things is now altered. The storm is over. A calm has succeeded. And why should not you take the benefit of these halcyon days, in which so many

G 3

others

others have found their ease, and even enjoyment?

THESE halcyon days, returned he, are not, alas! what unexperienced men are ready to represent them. The same vices, the same follies prevail still, and are even multiplied and enflamed by prosperity. A suffering court, if any, might be expected to be the seedplot of virtues. But to satisfy your scruples, I have even made a trial of these happier times. All I wished to myself from the happiest, was but such a return for my past services, as might enable me to retire with decency. Such a return I seem not to have merited. And I care not at this time of day to waste more of my precious time in deserving a better treatment.

YOUR day, said I, is not so far spent, as to require this hasty determination. Besides, if this be all, the world may be apt

to censure your retreat, as the effect of chagrin and disappointment.

HIS colour rose, as I said this; the world, resumed he, will censure as it sees fit. I must have leave at length to judge for myself in what so essentially concerns my own happiness. Though if ever *chagrin* may be pleaded as a reason for retirement, perhaps no body had ever a better right than I have to plead it. You know what hath happened of late, to give me a disgust to courts. You know the view I had in my late comedy [*i*], and the grounds I had to expect

[*i*] *The cutter of Coleman-street*; the occasion and purpose of which was this. At the restoration, there was not a set of men more troublesome to the ministry than the cavalier officers; amongst whom had crept in all the profligate of broken fortunes, to share in the merits and rewards of that name. COWLEY writ this comedy to unmask these wretches, and might reasonably pretend to some thanks for it. But, contrary to expectation, this very attempt raised a storm against him even at court, which beat vio-

that it would not be ill taken. But you know too the issue of that attempt. And should I, after this experience of courtly gratitude, go about to solicit their favours?

BUT, to let you see that I am swayed by better motives than those of *chagrin*, I shall not conceal from you what I am proud enough to think of my TALENTS, as well as temper.

THERE are but two sorts of men, pursued he, that should think of living in a court, however it be that we see animals of all sorts, clean and unclean, enter into it.

THE ONE is, of those strong and active spirits that are formed for business, whose ambition reconciles them to the bustle of life, and whose capacity fits

lently upon him. See his preface to that play in the later editions in 8^{vo}.

them

them for the discharge of its functions. These, especially if of noble birth and good fortunes, are destined to fill the first offices in a state; and if, peradventure, they add virtue to their other parts and qualities, are the blessings of the age they live in. Some few such there have been in former times; and the present, it may be, is not wholly without them.

THE OTHER sort, are what one may properly enough call, if the phrase were not somewhat uncourtly, the MOB OF COURTS; they, who have vanity or avarice without ambition, or ambition without talents. These by assiduity, good luck, and the help of their vices, (for they would scorn to earn advancement, if it were to be had, by any worthy practices) may in time succeed to the lower post in a government; and together make up that shewy, servile, selfish crowd we dignify with the name of COURT.

Now,

Now, though I think too justly of myself to believe I am qualified to enter into the *former* of these lists, you may conclude, if you please, that I am too proud to brigue for an admission into the *latter*. I pretend not to great abilities of any kind; but let me presume a little in supposing, that I may have some too good to be thrown away on such company,

HERE, my lord, the unusual freedom, and even indecency of Mr. COWLEY's invective against courts, transported me so far, that I could not forbear turning upon him with some warmth. Surely, said I, my friend is much changed from what I always conceived of him. This heat of language, from one of your candour, surprizes me equally with the injustice of it. It is so far from *calm reasoning*, that it wants but little, methinks, of being downright railing. I believe,

believe, continued I, that I think more highly, that is, more justly, of Mr. COWLEY in every respect, than he allows himself to do. Yet I see not that either his time, or his talents, would be misemployed in the services, he so much undervalues. Allow me to say, your resentment hath carried you too far; and that you do not enough consider the friends you left at court, or the noble lord that wishes your return thither.

I do, said he hastily, consider both. But, with your leave, since I am forced to defend myself against an ignominious charge, I must do myself the right to assume what I think belongs to me. I repeat it, I have long thought my time lost in the poor amusements and vanities of the great world, and that I have felt an impatience to get into a quiet scene, where, slender as my talents are, I might employ them to better purpose.

AND think not, proceeded he, that I am carried to this choice by any thing so frivolous as the idleness of a poetical fancy. Not but the Muse, which hath been the darling of my youth, may deserve to be the companion of my riper age. For I am far from renouncing an art, which, unprofitable as it hath ever been to me, is always entertaining: and when employed, as I mean it shall be, in other services than those by which a voluptuous court seems willing to disgrace it, I see not what there is in this amusement of poetry, for the severest censor of life and manners to take offence at. Yet still I intend it for an amusement. My serious occupations will be very different; such as you, my friend, cannot disapprove, and should encourage. But I have opened to you my intentions more than once, and need not give you the trouble at this time to hear me explain them.

You

You mean, interposed I, to apply yourself to *natural* and *religious* enquiries. Your design is commendable, and I would not dissuade you from it. But what should hinder your pursuing this design as well in society as in this solitude?

WHAT, at COURT, returned he, where the only object, that all men are in quest of, is GAIN, and the only deity they acknowledge, FORTUNE? or say, that such idolatries did not prevail there, how shall the mind be calm enough for so sublime enquiries? Or where, but in this scene of genuine nature, is there an opportunity to indulge in them? Here, if any where, is the observation of the poet verified, DEUS EST QUODCUNQUE VIDES. Look round, my friend, on this florid earth, on the various classes of *animals* that inhabit, and the countless
vegetable

vegetable tribes that adorn it. Here is the proper school of wisdom,

“ And this our life, exempt from public haunt,

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,

Sermons in stones, and good in every thing [k].”

INFINITE are the uses, continued he, which would result from this method of applying experiment and observation to *Natural Science*. I have taken occasion, you know, to offer a slight sketch of

[k] SHAKESPEAR. *As you like it*. A. II, S. I.—There is a quaintness in these lines of the great poet, which however are not unlike some of Mr. COWLEY's addressed to J. EVELYNE, Esq.

“ Where does the wisdom and the pow'r divine,

In a more bright and sweet reflexion shine?

Where do we finer strokes and colours see

Of the Creator's real poetry,

Than when we with attention look

Upon the third day's volume of the book?

If we could open and intend our eye,

We all, like *Moses*, should espy,

Ev'n in a *Bush*, the radiant Deity.

them

them to the public very lately [1]. But the principal I would draw from it to myself should be, to inure the mind to just conceptions of the divine nature; that so, with the better advantage, I might turn myself to the awful study of his *Word*. And here, my friend, I am sensible how much I may expect to be animated by your zeal, and enlightened by your instruction. In the mean time, I pretend to possess some qualities, which, if rightly applied, may not be unsuitable to so high an undertaking. I feel myself impelled by an eager curiosity: I have much patience, and some skill in making experiments. I may even be allowed to boast of a readiness in the learned languages: and am not without a tincture of such other studies, as the successful prosecution of PHYSICS, and still more of DIVINITY, requires. You may further

[1] In the PREFACE to his *Proposition for the advancement of experimental philosophy*, first printed in 1661. See the edition in 24th Lond. for H. Herringham.

impute to me, if you please, an ingenuous love of truth, and an ordinary degree of judgment to discern it.

THESE, concluded he, are the TALENTS, of which I spoke to you so proudly; and with the help of these, (especially if you allow me *one* other, the power of *communicating* what I may chance to learn of natural or divine things) I might hope to render a better account of this solitude, than of any employments I could reasonably aspire to, in the world of men and of business.

HE said this with an air of solemnity, which left me a little at a loss what to reply to him, when he relieved my perplexity by adding, "but, though there was nothing of all this in the case, and my zeal for promoting knowledge in this private way, were as lightly to be accounted of, as *that*, which led me to propose the more extensive scheme I before mentioned,

mentioned, probably will be, yet what should draw me from this leisure of a learned retirement? For though I please myself with the prospect of doing some *public* service by my studies, yet need I blush to own to my learned friend, the fondness I should still have for them, were they only to end in my own *private* enjoyment? Yes, let me open my whole soul to you. I have ever delighted in letters, and have even found them, what the world is well enough content they should be, their own reward. I doubt, if this language would be understood in all companies. And let others speak as they find. But to me the year would drag heavily, and life itself be no life, if it were not quickened by these ingenuous pleasures.

INDEED, were it only for the very quiet and indolence of mind, which retirement promises, why should I be envied

this calm in the decline of a troubled life?—But let the Muse speak for me:

After long toils and voyages in vain,
This quiet port let my tost vessel gain;
Of heav'nly rest this earnest to me lend,
Let my life sleep, and learn to love her end.

AND what if they, who have not the means of enjoying this *rest*, submit to the drudgery of business? Is that a reason for me to continue in it, who have made my fortune, even to the extent of my wishes? I see you smile at this boast. But where would you have me stop in my desires; or what is it you would have me understand by the mysterious language of *making a fortune*? Is it two hundred a year, or four, or a thousand? Say, where shall we fix, or what limits will you undertake to prescribe to the vague and shifting notion of a competency? Or, shall we own the truth at once, that every thing is a *competency* which a man is contented to live upon,
and

and that therefore it varies only, as his desires are more or less contracted?

To talk at any other rate of a *man's fortune*, is surely to expose one's self to the ridicule, which the philosopher, you know, threw on the restless humour of king Pyrrhus. 'Tis whim, chimera, madness, or what you will, except sober reason and common sense. Yet still the world cries, "What, sit down with a pittance, when the ways of honour and fortune are open to you? Take up with what may barely satisfy, when you have so fair a chance for affluence, and even superfluity?"

ALAS! and will that *affluence*, then, more than satisfy? Or can it be worth the while to labour, for a *superfluity*?

'Tis true, the violence of the times, in which it was my fortune to bear a part, had left me bare and unprovided even

of those moderate accommodations, which my education and breeding might demand, and which a parent's piety had indeed bequeathed to me. It was but fitting then I should strive to repair this loss; and the rather, as my honest services gave me leave to hope for a speedy reparation. And thus far I was contented to try my fortune in the court, though at the expence of much uneasy attendance and sollicitation. But seeing that this assiduity was without effect, and that the bounty of two excellent persons [*m*] hath now set me above the necessity of continuing it, what madness were it to embark again

“*Fluctibus in mediis et tempestatibus urbis?*

So that if you will needs be urging me with the ceaseless exhortation of

[*m*] Dr. SPRAT tells us, “That he had obtained a plentiful estate by the favour of my Lord ST. ALBANS, and the bounty of my lord duke of BUCKINGHAM.” [See his *Life*.”]

“ I,

“ I, bone, quo virtus tua te vocat : I pede
fausto,

Grandia laturus meritorum præmia :---

I must take leave to remind you of the sage reply that was made to it. It was, you know, by an old soldier, who found himself exactly in my situation. The purse, which, he had lost by one accident, he had recovered by another. The conclusion was, that he had no mind, in this different state of affairs, to turn adventurer again, and expose himself to the same perilous encounters.

“ Post hæc ille catus, quantumvis RUSTI-
CUS, “ Ibit,

Ibit eo, quo vis QUI ZONAM PERDIDIT,
inquit.”

IN one word, my friend, I am happy here, as you see me, in my little farm, which yet is large enough to answer all my real necessities; and I am not in the humour of him in the fable [n], to

[n] Meaning *The true history of Don Quixote*; in which poor *Sancho Panca* is drawn into all ad-

fill my head with visions, and spend a wretched life in quest of the *flying island*.

AND now, added he, you have before you in one view the principal reasons that have determined me to this retreat. I might have enlarged on each more copiously, but I know to whom I speak: and perhaps to such a one I might even have spared a good deal of what I have now been offering, from the several considerations of my TEMPER, TALENTS, and SITUATION.

HERE he stopped. And now, my lord, it came to my turn to take the lead in this controversy. There was indeed an ample field before me. And, if the other side of the question afforded most matter for wit and declamation, mine had all the advantages of good sense and sound reason. The superiority was so

ventures, by the promise of his *knight*, to reward him in due time, with the government of an *island*.

apparent,

apparent, and my victory over him, in point of argument, so sure, that I thought it needless and ungenerous to press him on every article of his defence, in which he had laid himself open to me.

YOUR lordship hath, no doubt, observed with wonder and with pity, the strange spirit that runs through every part of it: the confined way of thinking, which hath crept upon him; the cynical severity, he indulges against courts; the importance, he would sometimes assume to his own character; the peevish turn of mind, that leads him to take offence at the lighter follies and almost excusable vices of the great; in short, the resentment, the pique, the chagrin, which one overlooks in the hopeless suitor, or hungry poet, but which are very unaccountable in one of Mr. COWLEY's condition and situation.

HERE then, my lord, was a fair occasion for a willing adversary. But I spared the infirmities of my friend. I judged it best, too, to keep him in temper, and avoid that heat of altercation, which must have arisen from touching these indiscretions, as they deserved. Your lordship sees the reason I had for confining my reply to such parts of his apology, as bore the fairest shew of argument, and might be encountered without offence.

WHEN he had ended, therefore, with so formal a recapitulation of his discourse, I thought it not amiss to follow him in his own train; and dissembling the just exceptions I had to his vindication in other respects, "You have proceeded," said I, in a very distinct method, and have said as much, I believe, on the subject, as so bad a cause would admit. But if this indeed be all you have to alledge, for so uncommon a fancy, you must not
think

think it strange, if I pronounce it, without scruple, very insufficient for your purpose.

FOR, to give your several pleas a distinct examination, what is that TEMPER, let me ask, on which you insist so much, but a wayward humour, which your true judgment should correct and controul by the higher and more important regards of *duty*? Every man is born with some prevailing propensity or other, which, if left to itself, and indulged beyond certain bounds, would grow to be very injurious to himself and society. There is something, no doubt, amusing in the notion of *retirement*. The very word implies ease and quiet, and self-enjoyment. And who doubts, that in the throng and bustle of life, most men are fond to image to themselves, and even to wish for a scene of more composure and tranquillity? It is just as natural as that the labourer should long for his repose

at

at night; or that the soldier, amidst the dust and heat of a summer's march, should wish for the conveniencies of shade and shelter. But what wild work would it make, if these so natural desires should be immediately gratified? If the labourer should quit his plow, and the soldier his arms, to throw themselves into the first shade or thicket that offered refreshment? All you have therefore said on this article can really stand for nothing in the eye of sober reason, whatever figure it may make in the dress of your eloquence [o]. The inconveniencies of every station are to be indured from the obligations of duty, and on account

[o] Lord BACON gives another account of this matter.—“As for the privateness of life of contemplative men, it is a theme so common to extol a private life, not taxed with sensuality and sloth, in comparison, and to the disadvantage of a civil life, for safety, liberty, pleasure, and dignity, *as no man handleth it, but handleth it well*: such a consonancy it hath to men's conceits in the expressing, and to men's consents in the allowing.” [*Adv. of Learning*, Book I.]

of the services one is bound to render to himself and his country.

TRUE, replied he, if it appeared to be one's duty, or even interest, to continue in that station. But what principle of conscience binds me to a slavish dependance at court? Or what interest, public or private, can be an equivalent for wearing these chains, when I have it in my power to throw them off, and redeem myself into a state of liberty?

WHAT *Interest*, do you ask, returned I? Why that great and extensive one, which *society* hath in an honest and capable man's continuing to bear a part in public affairs. For as to inducements of another kind, I may find occasion hereafter to press them upon you more seasonably. Consider well with yourself, what would the consequence be, if all men of honour and ability were to act upon your principles? What a world would this be, if

I knaves

knaves and fools only had the management in their hands, and all the virtuous and wise, as it were by common consent, were to withdraw from it? Nay, the issue would even be fatal to themselves; and they would presently find it impossible to taste repose, even in their own sanctuary of retirement.

SMALL need, replied he, to terrify one's self with such apprehensions. The virtuous, at least they who pass for such, will generally have ambition enough to keep them in the road of public employments. So long as there are such things as riches and honours, courts will never be unfurnished of suitors, even from amongst the tribes of letter'd and virtuous men. The desperately bad, at least, will never have the field left entirely to themselves. And after all, the interest of men in office is, in the main, so providentially connected with some regard to the rules of honour and conscience,

science, that there is seldom any danger that matters should come to extremities under the *worst* administration. And I doubt this is all we are to expect, or at least to reckon upon, with assurance, under the very *best*.

BUT my answer is more direct. It is not for your little friend to think of getting a seat in the cabinet-council, or of conducting the great affairs of the state. He knows himself to be as unfit for those high trusts, as he is incapable of aspiring to them. Besides, he does not allow himself to doubt of their being discharged with perfect ability, by the great persons who now fill them. HE, at least, who occupies the foremost place of authority, is, by the allowance of all, to be paralleled with ANY that the wisest prince hath ever advanced to that station [*p*]. And when so consummate a

[*p*] The justness of this encomium on Lord CLARENDON will hardly be disputed by any man, whose opinion is worth regarding.—What pity, pilot

pilot sits at the helm, it seems a matter of little moment by what hands the vessel of the common-wealth is navigated.

that Mr. COWLEY's connexions with some persons, inde voted to the excellent Chancellor, kept him at a distance from a man, so congenial to himself, and for whom he could not but entertain the highest esteem! The Chancellor, though he could not be expected to take him out of the hands of his old patrons, seems, yet, to have been generous enough to Mr. COWLEY, not to resent those connexions; as may be gathered from the handsome testimony, paid to his merit, in the *Continuation of the History of his own Life*. Speaking of B. JOHNSON, he says—
 "He [BEN JOHNSON] was the best judge of, and fittest to prescribe rules to, poetry and poets, of any man who had lived with, or before him, or since; *If Mr. COWLEY had not made a flight beyond all men*; with that modesty yet, to ascribe much of this, to the example and learning of BEN JOHNSON."—
 Among the other infelicities of men of genius, ONE is, and not the least, that it rarely happens to them to have the choosing of the persons, to whom they would most wish to be obliged. The sensibility of their gratitude being equal to their other parts and virtues, the man, whose favour they chance first to experience, is sure of their constant services and attachment through life; how strongly soever their interest, and even their judgment may *draw* another way.

I COULD

I COULD not agree with him in this concluding remark, and much less in the high-flown encomium which introduced it [q]. But waving these lesser matters, I contented myself with observing, "That let him put what gloss he would on this humour of declining civil business, it must needs be considered by all unbiaſſed persons, as highly prejudicial to public order and government; that if good men would not be employed, the bad must; and that, to say the least, the cause of learning and virtue must suffer exceedingly in the eyes of men, when they see those very qualities, which alone can render us useful to the world, dispose us to fly from it.

FOR as to the *plea*, continued I, of employing them to better purpose in the

[q] The reader is not to forget, that Mr. SPRAT is writing to the Lord ST. ALBANS, and was, at this time, chaplain to the duke of BUCKINGHAM.

way

way of *private and solitary* CONTEMPLATION, I can hold it for little better than enthusiasm. Several persons, I know, would give it a worse name, and say, as TACITUS somewhere does, that it serves only for a specious cover to that love of ease and self-indulgence, which he will have to be at the bottom of such pretences [*r*]. But even with the best construction, the matter was capable of, he could never, I insisted, justify that plea to the understandings of prudent and knowing men. We allow the obscure pedant to talk high of the dignity of his office, and magnify, as much as he pleases, the importance of his speculations. Such an indulgence serves to keep him in humour with himself, and may be a means to convert a low and

[*r*] “*Ingenium illustre altioribus studiis juvenis admodum dedit: non, ut PLERIQUE, UT NOMINE MAGNIFICO SEGNE OTIUM VELARET, sed quo firmior adversus fortuita rempublicam capefferet.*” [*Hist.* IV. 5.]—Part of the fine character given us of HELVIDIUS PRISCUS.

plodding

plodding genius to the only use, of which it is capable. But for a man of experience in affairs, and who is qualified to shine in them, to hold this language, is very extraordinary.

I saw with what impatience he heard me, and therefore took care to add, " 'Tis true, the studies to which you would devote yourself, are the noblest in the world of science. For *Divinity*, the very name speaks its elogium. And the countenance with which his majesty is pleased, in his true wisdom, to give to *natural science*, must be thought to enoble that branch of learning beyond all others, that are merely of human consideration. Yet still, my friend, what need of taking these studies out of the hands of those, to whom they are properly entrusted? Religion is very safe in the bosom of the national church. And questions of natural science will doubtless be effectually clear-

ed and ventilated in the *New Society* [s], and in the schools of our *Universities*. It could never be his majesty's intention to thin his court, for the sake of furnishing students in natural philosophy.

AND can you then, interposed he, in your concern for what you very improperly call my interests, allow yourself to speak so coolly of the great interests of natural and divine truth? Is religion a trade to be confined to the craftsmen? Or, are fellows of colleges and of the Royal society, if such we are to have, the only persons concerned to adore God in the wonders of his creation? Pardon me, my friend; I know you mean nothing less; but the strange indifference of your phrase, provokes me to this expostulation.

You warm yourself, resumed I, too hastily. My design was only to suggest,

[s] THE ROYAL SOCIETY; not yet instituted, but much talked of, at this time.

that

that as there are certain orders of men appointed for the sole purpose of studying divinity, and advancing philosophy, I did not see that a man of business was obliged to desert his proper station for the sake of either.

I SUSPECT, said he, there may be some equivocation wrapped up in that word *obliged*. All I know is, that I shall spend my time more innocently, at least; and, I presume to think, more usefully in those studies, than in that slippery *station*, if it may deserve to be called one, of court-favour and dependance. And if I extended the observation to many others, that are fond to take up their residence in these quarters, I cannot believe I should do them any injustice.

I CANNOT tell, returned I, against whom this censure is pointed. But I know there are many of the gravest characters, and even lights and fathers of

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the

the church, who do not consider it as inconsistent, either with their duty, or the usefulness of their profession, to continue in that station.

O! MISTAKE me not, replied he, I intended no reflexion on any of the clergy, and much less on the great prelates of the church, for their attendance in the courts of princes. Their's is properly an exempt case. They are the authorized guides and patterns of life. Their great abilities indeed qualify them, above all others, for serving the cause of science and religion, by their private studies and meditations. But they very properly consider too, that part of their duty is to enlighten the ignorant of all ranks, by their wise and pious discourse, and to awe and reclaim the wandring of all denominations, by their example. Hence it is, that I cannot enough admire the zeal of so many pastors of the church, who, though the slavish manners and liber-

libertinism of a court must be more than ordinarily offensive to men of their characters, continue to discharge their office so painfully, and yet so punctually, in that situation.

HERE, my lord, observing my friend for once to deliver himself, reasonably, I was encouraged to add, that, since he was so just to maintain the commerce of good and wise churchmen in the great world to be, as it truly was, a matter of duty, he should also have the candour to own, that his withdrawing from it was, at least, a work of *Supererogation*.

IT might be so, he said; but though our church gave no encouragement to think we *merit* by such works, he did not know that it condemned and utterly forbade them.

O! BUT, returned I, if that be all, and you acknowledge at last that your *retir-*
I 3
ing

ing is no matter of duty, it will be easy to advance another step, and demonstrate to you, that such a project is, in your case, altogether unreasonable [*t*].

FOR, notwithstanding all you have said, in the spirit and language of stoicism, of the comforts of your present SITUATION, will you seriously undertake to persuade me that they are in any degree comparable to what you might propose to yourself, by returning to a life of business? Is the littleness, the obscurity, and pardon me if I even say, the meanness of this retreat, to be put in competition with the liberal and even splendid provision, which your friends at court will easily be able to make for you? Is it nothing, my friend, (for let us talk common

[*t*] We have in this remonstrance that follows, the usual language of those we call our *friends*; which may sometimes be the *cause*, but is oftner the *pretence* of ambition. Hear how gravely Sir DUDLEY CARLTON, who loved business, and drudged on in it all his life, is pleased, in an evil hour, to express
 sense,

sense, and not bewilder ourselves with the visions of philosophy) is it nothing to live in a well-furnished house, to keep a good table, to command an equipage, to have many friends and dependants, to be courted by inferiors, to be well received by the great, and to be somebody even in the *presence*?

AND what if, in order to compass such things, some little devoirs and assiduities are expected? Is it not the general practice? And what every body submits to, can it be ignominious? Is this any thing more than conforming one's self to the necessary subordination of society? Or, what if some time passes in these services, which a present humour suggests might be more agreeably spent in other amuse-
himself; "The best is, I was never better, and were it not more for a necessity that is imposed by the EXPECTATION OF FRIENDS, not to stand at a stay and SENESCERE, whilst a man is young, than for ambition, I would not complain myself of my misfortunes." [Sir RALPH WINWORD'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 45.]

ments? The recompence cannot be far off; and, in the mean time, the lustre and very agitation of a life of business, hath something in it sprightly and amusing. Besides, your's is not the case of one that is entering, for the first time, on a course of expectation. Your business is half done. The prince is favourable; and there are of his ministers that respect and honour you. Your services are well known; your reputation is fair; your connexions great; and the season inviting. What, with all these advantages, forego the court in a moping mood, or, as angry men use, run to moralize in a cloyster!

I WAS proceeding in the warmth of this remonstrance, when with a reproachful smile, he turned upon me, and, in a kind of rapture, repeated the following lines of SPENSER.

“ Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
What hell it is in suing long to bide :

To

To lose good dayes, that might be better spent;
 To waste long nights in pensive discontent :
 To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow ;
 To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow ;
 To have thy prince's grace, yet want his
 peeres [*u*] ;
 To have thy askings, yet wait many yeers[*w*] ;
 To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares ;
 To eat thy heart through comfortless despair ;
 To faun, to crouche, to wait, to ride, to ronne ;
 To spend, to give, to want, to be undonne.

This, said he, is my answer once for all
 to your long string of interrogatories.

[*u*] That Mr. COWLEY *had* his prince's grace, appears from what the king said of him, on the news of his death : "*That he had not left a BETTER man behind him in England.*" And this was *grace* enough, in reason, from *SUCH* a prince.—How it came to pass that he *wanted* the grace of his peeres (if, indeed, he *did* want it), hath been explained in note on p. 109.

[*w*] The application of this line is to the affair of the *Mastership of the Savoy* ; "which though granted, says Mr. WOOD, to his highest merit by both the CHARLES's I and II, yet by certain persons, enemies to the Muses, he lost that place."—But this was not the worst. For, such is the hard lot of unsuccessful men, the *Savoy-missing* COWLEY became

I learnt it of one that had much experience in courts: And I thought it worth imprinting on my memory, to have it in readinefs on fuch an occafion. Or, if you would rather have my answer in my own words, the Mufe fhall give it you in a little poem, ſhe dictated very lately [x]. It may ſhew you perhaps, that, though my nature be ſomewhat melancholy, I am not *moping*; and that I can moralize, and even *complain*, as I have reaſon to do, without being *angry*.

THE look and tone of voice, with which he ſaid this, a little diſconcerted me. But I recovered myſelf, and was going on to object to his unreaſonable the object of ridicule, inſtead of pity, even to the wits themſelves; as may be ſeen in “*The ſeſſion of the poets*, amongſt the *miſcellaneous poems* published by Mr. DRYDEN.”

Quid DOMINI facient, audent ſi talia FURES?

[x] Printed among his works, under the name of THE COMPLAINT. The relation, it has to the ſubject debated, made me think it not amiſs to print it at the end of this Dialogue.—It muſt raiſe one’s indignation to find that ſo juſt, ſo delicate, and ſo warmth,

warmth, and the fascination of this wicked poetry, when he stopped me with saying, "Come, no more of these remonstrances and upbraidings. I have heard enough of your pleadings in a cause, which no eloquence can carry against my firm and fixed resolutions. I have seen, besides, the force you have done to yourself in this mock-combat. Your extreme friendliness hath even tempted you to act a part which your true sense, and the very decorum of your profession, I have observed through all your disguises, has rendered painful to you. I will tell you my whole mind in one word. No inducements of what the world calls INTEREST, no views of HONOUR, no, nor what the poet aptly calls, SANCTISSIMA DIVITIARUM MAJESTAS [y], shall make me recede from the purpose I am bent upon, of consecrating the remainder of a manly *a complaint* should be scoffed at, as it was by the wits before mentioned, under the name of THE PITIFUL MELANCHOLY.

[y] Juvenal, *Sat.* i. *l.* 112.

comfort-

comfortless distracted life, to the sweets of this obscure retirement. Believe me, I have weighed it well, with all its inconveniencies. And I find them such as are nothing to the agonies I have long felt in that troubled scene, to which you would recal me. If it hath any ingredients, which I cannot so well relish, they are such as my friends, and, above all, such as you, my best friend may reconcile to me. Let me but have the pleasure to see the few, I love and esteem, in these shades, and I shall not regret their solitude.

AND as for my much honoured friend, whose munificence hath placed me in them, I shall hope to satisfy him in the most effectual manner. Nothing, you will believe, could give me a pain equal to that of being suspected of ingratitude towards my best benefactor. It was indeed with the utmost difficulty, that I constrained myself at last to think of
leaving

leaving his service. The truth is, he expostulated with me upon it pretty roundly; and though my resolution was taken, I left him with the concern of not being able to give him entire satisfaction. These repeated instances by you are a fresh proof of his goodness, and do me an honour I had little reason to expect from him. But his lordship's notions of life and mine are very different, as is fitting in persons, whom fortune hath placed in two such different situations. It becomes me to bear the most grateful remembrance of his kind intentions; and, for the rest, I can assure myself, that his equity and nobleness of mind will permit an old servant to pursue, at length, his own inclinations.

HOWEVER, to repay his goodness as I can, and to testify all imaginable respect to his judgment, I have purposed to write my own APOLOGY to his lordship; and to represent to him, in a better manner,

ner, than I have done in this sudden and unpremeditated conversation, the reasons that have determined me to this resolution. I have even made some progress in the design, and have digested into several *essays* the substance of such reflexions as, at different times, have had most weight with me [z].

HEARING him speak in so determined a manner, I was discouraged from pressing

[z] Whether it were owing to his other occupations, or that he had no great confidence in the success of this attempt, these *Essays*, which *were to give entire satisfaction* to his court-friend in the affair of his retirement, went on very slowly. They were even left imperfect at his death, “a little before which (says Dr. SPRAT) he communicated to me his resolutions, to have dedicated them all to my Lord ST. ALBANS, as a testimony of his entire respects to him; and a *kind of apology* for having left human affairs in the strength of his age, while he might have been serviceable to his country.”—However, if this apology had not the *intended* effect, it had a much better. Lords and wits may decide of the qualities of Mr. COWLEY’s *head*, as they please; but, so long as these *Essays* remain, they will oblige all honest men *to love the language of his heart*.

him

him further with such other considerations, as I had prepared on this argument. Only I could not help enforcing, in the warmest manner, and in terms your lordship would not allow me to use in this recital, what he himself had owned of your unexampled goodness to him; and the obligation which, I insisted, that must needs create in a generous mind, of paying an unreserved obedience to your lordship's pleasure. He gave me the hearing very patiently; but contented himself with repeating his design of justifying himself to your lordship in the apology he had before promised.

AND now, resumed he with an air of alacrity, since you know my whole mind, and that no remonstrances can move me, confess the whole truth; acknowledge at last that you have dissembled with me all this while, and that, in reality, you approve my resolution. I know you do, my friend, though you struggle hard

to conceal it. It cannot be otherwise. Nature, which linked our hearts together, had formed us in one mould. We have the same sense of things; the same love of letters and of virtue. And though I would not solicit one of your years and your profession to follow me into the shade, yet I know you so well [a], that you will preserve in the world that equal frame of mind, that indifference to all earthly things, which I pretend to have carried with me into this solitude.

Go on, my friend, in this track; and be an example to the churchmen of our days, that the highest honours of the gown, which I easily foresee are destined to your abilities, are not incompatible with the strictest purity of life, and the most heroic sentiments of integrity and honour. Go, and adorn the dignities which are reserved for you; and remember only in the heights of prosperity

[a] Alas, he was mistaken.

to be what you are, to serve the world with vigour, yet so as to indulge with me

“ THE GENEROUS SCORN
OF THINGS, FOR WHICH WE WERE NOT
BORN [*b*].”

I BEGAN to be a little uneasy at his long sermon, when he broke it off with this couplet. The day by this time was pretty far advanced; and rising from his seat, he proposed to me to walk into his hermitage (so he called his house); where, he said, I should see how a philosopher lived as well as talked. I staid to dine, and spent a good part of the afternoon with him. We discoursed of various matters; but not a word more on what had occasioned this visit. Only he shewed me the *complaining poem* he had mentioned, and of which, for the pleasure so fine a composition will give you, I here send your lordship a copy. His spirits,

[*b*] A citation from one of his own poems.

he said, were enlivened by the face of an old friend; and indeed I never knew his conversation more easy and chearful [c]; which yet I could not perfectly enjoy for the regret the ill success of my negociation had given me.

I RETURNED to town in the evening, ruminating on what had passed, and resolving to send your lordship an exact account of our conversation. I particularly made a point of suppressing nothing which Mr. COWLEY had to say for himself in this debate, however it may sometimes seem to make against me. The whole hath grown under my pen into a greater length than I expected. But your lordship wished to know the bottom of our friend's mind, and I thought you would see it more distinctly

[c] Mr. SPRAT himself tells us, speaking of Mr. COWLEY's retreat, that "some few friends and books, a *chearful heart*, and innocent conscience, were his constant companions." *Life*.

and

and clearly in this way, than in any other. I am, my lord, with the most profound respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient

and faithful Servant,

T. SPRAT.

THE
COMPLAINT ^[d].

IN a deep vision's intellectual scene
Beneath a bow'r for sorrow made,
Th' uncomfortable shade
Of the black Yew's unlucky green,

[d] This is one of the prettiest of Mr. COWLEY's smaller Poems. The plan of it is highly poetical : And, though the numbers be not the most pleasing, the expression is almost every where natural and beautiful. But it's principal charm is that air of

Mixt with the mourning willow's careful gray,
Where reverend CAM cuts out his famous way,

The melancholy COWLEY lay:

And lo! a Muse appear'd to's closed sight,
(The Muses oft in lands of visions play)

Bodied, arrayed, and seen by an internal light:

A golden harp with silver strings she bore,

A wondrous hieroglyphic robe she wore,

In which all colours, and all figures were,

That nature, or that fancy can create,

That art can never imitate;

And with loose pride it wanton'd in the air.

In such a dress, in such a well-cloth'd dream,

She us'd of old, near fair ISMENUS stream,

PINDAR her THEBAN favourite to meet;

A crown was on her head, and wings were on
her feet.

II.

She touch'd him with her harp, and rais'd him
from the ground;

The shaken strings melodiously resound.

melancholy, thrown over the whole, so expressive of the poet's character.

The *address* of the writer is seen in conveying his just reproaches on the *Court*, under a pretended vindication of it against the *Muse*.

Art thou return'd at last, said she,
To this forsaken place and me?

Thou prodigal, who didst so loosely waste
Of all thy youthful years, the good estate;
Art thou return'd here to repent too late?

And gather husks of learning up at last,
Now the rich harvest-time of life is past,
And *Winter* marches on so fast?

But when I meant t' adopt thee for my son,
And did as learn'd a portion thee assign,
As ever any of the mighty nine

Had to her dearest children done;

When I resolv'd t' exalt thy anointed name,
Among the spiritual lords of peaceful fame [*e*];
Thou changeling, thou, bewitch'd with noise
and show

Would'st into courts and cities from me go;
Would'st see the world abroad, and have a
share

In all the follies, and the tumults there,
Thou would'st, forsooth, be something in a
state,

And business thou would'st find, and would'st
create :

[*e*] An execrable line.

Business ! the frivolous pretence
 Of humane lusts to shake off innocence :
 Business ; the grave impertinence :
 Business ! the thing which I of all things
 hate,
 Business ! the contradiction of thy fate.

III.

Go, renegado, cast up thy account,
 And see to what amount
 Thy foolish gains by quitting me :
 The sale of knowledge, fame, and liberty,
 The fruits of thy unlearn'd apostasy.
 Thou thought'st, if once the public storm were
 past,
 All thy remaining life should sun-shine be :
 Behold, the public storm is spent at last,
 The sovereign is tost at sea no more,
 And thou, with all the noble company,
 Art got at last to shore.
 But whilst thy fellow voyagers, I see,
 All march'd up to possess the promis'd land,
 Thou still alone (alas) dost gaping stand
 Upon the naked beach, upon the barren sand.

IV.

As a fair morning of the blessed spring,
 After a tedious stormy night;
 Such was the glorious entry of our king,
 Enriching moisture drop'd on every thing:
 Plenty he sow'd below, and cast about him
 light.

But then (alas) to thee alone,
 One of old GIDEON's miracles was shown;
 For every tree, and every herb around,
 With pearly dew was crown'd,
 And upon all the quickened ground,
 The fruitful seed of heaven did brooding lye,
 And nothing but the Muses fleece was drye.

It did all other threats surpass
 When God to his own people said,
 (The men, whom thro' long wandrings he
 had led)

That he would give them ev'n a heav'n of
 brass;
 They look'd up to that heav'n in vain,
 That bounteous heav'n, which God did not
 restrain,
 Upon the most unjust to shine and rain.

V.

The RACHAEL, for which twice seven years
and more

Thou didst with faith and labour serve,
And didst (if faith and labour can) deserve,

Though she contracted was to thee,

Giv'n to another who had store

Of fairer, and of richer wives before,

And not a *Leah* left, thy recompence to be.

Go on, twice seven years more thy fortune try,

Twice seven years more, God in his bounty
may

Give thee, to fling away

Into the court's deceitful lottery.

But think how likely 'tis that thou

With the dull work of thy unwieldy plough,

Should'st in a hard and barren season thrive,

Should even able be to live ;

Thou, to whose share so little bread did fall,

In the miraculous year, when MANNA rain'd
on all.

VI.

Thus spake the Muse, and spake it with a smile,
That seem'd at once to pity and revile,

And

And to her thus raising his thoughtful head,
 The melancholy COWLEY said :
 Ah wanton foe, dost thou upbraid
 The ills which thou thyself hast made ?
 When in the cradle, innocent I lay,
 Thou, wicked spirit, stolest me away,
 And my abused soul didst bear
 Into thy new-found worlds I know not where,
 Thy golden *Indies* in the air ;
 And ever since I strive in vain
 My ravished freedom to regain :
 Still I rebel, still thou dost reign,
 Lo, still in verse against thee I complain.

There is a sort of stubborn weeds,
 Which, if the earth but once, it ever breeds ;
 No wholesome herb can near them thrive,
 No useful plant can keep alive ;
 The foolish sports I did on thee bestow,
 Make all my art and labour fruitless now ;
 “ Where once such fairies dance, no grass doth
 ever grow.

VII.

When my new mind had no infusion known,
 Thou gav’st so deep a tincture of thine own,
 That ever since I vainly try
 To wash away th’ inherent dye :

Long work perhaps may spoil thy colours quite,
But never will reduce the native white ;

To all the ports of honour and of gain,
I often steer my course in vain,
Thy gale comes cross, and drives me back again.
Thus slack'nest all my nerves of industry,

By making them so oft to be
The tinkling strings of thy loose minstrellic.
Whoever this world's happiness would see,
Must as entirely cast off thee,
As they who only heaven desire,
Do from the world retire.

'This was my error, this my gross mistake,
Myself a demy-votary to make,
Thus with SAPPHIRA, and her husband's fate,
(A fault which I like them am taught too late)
For all that I gave up, I nothing gain,
And perish for the part which I retain.

VIII.

Teach me not then, O thou fallacious Muse,
The court, and better king t' accuse ;
The heaven under which I live is fair ;
The fertile soil will a full harvest bear ;
Thine, thine is all the barrenness ; if thou
Mak'st me sit still and sing, when I should
plough ;

When

When I but think, how many a tedious year
Our patient sov'raign did attend
His long misfortunes fatal end ;
How chearfully, and how exempt from fear,
On the Great Sovereign's will he did depend,
I ought to be accurst, if I refuse
To wait on his, O thou fallacious muse !
Kings have long hands (they say) and though
I be
So distant, they may reach at length to me.
However, of all princes thou
Should'st not reproach rewards for being small
or slow ;
Thou, who rewardest but with popular breath,
And that too after death,

DIALOGUE III.

On the Age of Queen ELIZABETH.

MR. DIGBY, DR. ARBUTHNOT, MR. ADDISON.

IT happened, in the summer of the year 1716, that Dr. ARBUTHNOT and Mr. ADDISON had occasion to take a journey together into *Warwickshire*. Mr. DIGBY, who had received intelligence of their motions and was then at *Colehill*, contrived to give them the meeting at *Warwick*; where they intended to pass a day or two, in visiting the curiosities of that fine town, and the more remarkable of those remains of antiquity that are to be seen in its neighbourhood. These were matter of high entertainment to all of them; to Dr. ARBUTHNOT, for the pleasure he had in recollecting the ancient

tient times; to Mr. ADDISON, on account of some reflexions of another kind he was fond of indulging on such occasions; and to Mr. DIGBY, from an ingenuous curiosity, and the love of seeing and observing whatever was most remarkable, whether in the past ages, or the present.

AMONGST other things that amused them, they were much taken with the great church at *Warwick*. They entertained themselves with the several histories, which it's many old monuments recalled to their memory [*f*]. The famous inscription of Sir FULK GREVIL occasioned some reflexions; especially to Mr. DIGBY, who had used to be much affected with the fame and fortunes of the accomplished Sir PHILIP SYDNEY. The glory of the house of WARWICK was, also, an ample field of meditation. But

[*f*] For the account of these *Monuments*, and of *Kenelworth-Castle*, see the plans and descriptions of DUGDALE.

what

what chanced to take their attention most, was the monument of the great earl of LEICESTER. It recorded his titles at full length, and was, besides, richly decorated with sculpture, displaying the various ensigns and trophies of his greatness. The pride of this minister had never appeared to them so conspicuous, as in the legends and ornaments of his tomb-stone; which had not only outlived his family, but seemed to assure itself of immortality, by taking refuge, as it were, at the foot of the altar.

THESE funeral honours engaged them in some common reflexions on the folly of such expedients to perpetuate human grandeur; but at the same time, as is the usual effect of these things, struck their imaginations very strongly. They readily apprehended what must have been the state of this mighty favourite in his lifetime, from what they saw of it in this proud memorial, which continued in a manner

manner to insult posterity so many years after his death. But understanding that the fragments at least of his supreme glory, when it was flourishing at its height, were still to be seen at *KENELWORTH*, which they knew could be at no great distance, they resolved to visit them the next day, and indulge to the utmost, the several reflexions which such scenes are apt to inspire. On inquiry they found it was not more than five or six miles to the castle; so that by starting early in the morning, they might easily return to dinner at *Warwick*. They kept to their appointment so well, that they got to *Kenelworth* in good time, and had even two or three hours on their hands to spend, in taking an exact view of the place.

It was luckily one of those fine days, which our travellers would most have wished for, and which indeed are most agreeable in this season. It was clear
 enough

enough to afford a distinct prospect of the country, and to set the objects, they wanted to take a view of, in a good light ; and yet was so conveniently clouded as to check the heat of the sun, and make the exercise of walking, of which they were likely to have a good deal, perfectly easy to them.

WHEN they alighted from the coach, the first object that presented itself, was the principal GATEWAY of the Castle. It had been converted into a farm-house, and was indeed the only part of these vast ruins, that was inhabited. On their entrance into the *Inner-court*, they were struck with the sight of many mouldring towers, which preserved a sort of magnificence even in their ruins. They amused themselves with observing the vast compass of the whole, with marking the uses, and tracing the dimensions, of the several parts. All which it was easy for them to do by the very distinct traces

that remained of them, and especially by means of DUGDALE's plans and descriptions, which they had taken care to consult.

AFTER rambling about for some time, they clambered up a heap of ruins, which lay on the west side the court: and thence came to a broken tower, which, when they had mounted some steps, let them out into a path-way on the tops of the walls. From this eminence they had a very distinct view of the several parts they had before contemplated; of the *Gardens* on the north-side; of the *Winding Meadow* that encompassed the walls of the castle, on the west and south; and had, besides, the command of the country round about them for many miles. The prospect of so many antique towers falling into rubbish, contrasted to the various beauties of the landscape, struck them with admiration, and kept them silent for some time.

AT length recovering himself, I perceive, said Dr. ARBUTHNOT, we are all of us not a little affected with the sight of these ruins. They even create a melancholy in me; and yet a melancholy of so delightful a kind, that I would not exchange it, methinks, for any brisker sensation. The experience of this effect hath often led me to inquire, how it is that the mind, even while it laments, finds so great a pleasure in visiting these scenes of desolation. Is it, continued he, from the pure love of antiquity, and the amusing train of reflexions into which such remains of ancient magnificence naturally lead us?

I KNOW not, returned Mr. ADDISON, what pain it may give you to contemplate these triumphs of time and fortune. For my part, I am not sensible of the mixt sensation you speak of. I feel a pleasure indeed; but it is sincere, and,

as I conceive, may be easily accounted for. 'Tis nothing more, I believe, than a fiction of the imagination, which makes me think I am taking a revenge on the once prosperous and overshadowing height, PRÆUMBRANS FASTIGIUM, as somebody expresses it, of inordinate Greatness. It is certain, continued he, this theatre of a great statesman's pride, the delight of many of our princes, and which boasts of having given entertainment to one of them in a manner so splendid, as to claim a remembrance, even in the annals of our country, would now, in its present state, administer ample matter for much insulting reflexion.

“ WHERE, one might ask, are the tilts and tournaments, the princely shews and sports which were once so proudly celebrated within these walls? where are the pageants, the studied devices and emblems of curious invention, that set the court at a gaze, and even transported the
high

high soul of our ELIZABETH? Where now, pursued he (pointing to that which was formerly a canal, but at present is only a meadow with a small rivulet running through it) where is the floating island, the blaze of torches that eclipsed the day, the lady of the lake, the silken nymphs her attendants, with all the other fantastic exhibitions surpassing even the whimsies of the wildest romance? What now is become of the revelry of feasting? of the minstrelsy, that took the ear so delightfully as it babbled along the valley, or floated on the surface of this lake? See there the smokeless kitchens, stretching to a length that might give room for the sacrifice of a hecatomb; the vaulted hall, which mirth and jollity have set so often in an uproar; the rooms of state, and the presence-chamber; what are they now but void and tenantless ruins, clasped with ivy, open to wind and weather, and presenting to the eye nothing but the ribs and carcase, as it were,

of their former state? And see, said he, that proud gate-way, once the mansion of a surly porter [g], who, partaking of the pride of his lord, made the crouds wait, and refused admittance, perhaps, to nobles whom fear or interest drew to these

[g] The speaker's ideas of Lord LEICESTER's porter agrees with the character he sustained on the queen's reception at *Kenelworth*; as we find it described in a paper of good authority written at that time. "Here a PORTER, tall of person, big of limbs, stark of countenance—with club and keys of quantity according; in a rough speech, full of passion in metre, while the queen came within his ward, burst out in a great pang of impatience to see such uncouth trudging to and fro, such riding in and out, with such din and noise of talk, within his charge; whereof he never saw the like, nor had any warning once, ne yet could make to himself any cause of the matter. At last, upon better view and advertisement, he proclaims open gates and free passage to all; yields over his club, his keys, his office and all, and on his knees humbly prays pardon of his ignorance and impatience. Which her highness graciously granting, &c."—

A letter from an attendant in court to his friend a citizen and merchant of *London*.
From the court, at *Worcester*, 20 Aug.

1575.

walls,

walls, to pay their homage to their master; see it now the residence of a poor tenant, who turns the key but to let himself out to his daily labour, to admit him to a short meal, and secure his nightly slumbers. Yet, in this humble state, it hath had the fortune to outlive the glory of the rest, and hath even drawn to itself the whole of that little note and credit, which time hath continued to this once pompous building. For while the castle itself is crumbled into shapeless ruins, and is prophaned, as we there see, by the vilest uses, this outwork of greatness is left entire, sheltered and closed in from bird and beast, and even affords some decent room in which the *human face divine* is not ashamed to shew itself."

WHILE Mr. ADDISON went on in this vein, his two friends stood looking on each other; as not conceiving what might be the cause of his expressing himself with so uncommon a vehemence. When

the fit was over, I confess, said Dr. ARBUTHNOT, this is no bad topic for a moralist to declaim upon. And, though it be a trite one, we know how capable it is of being adorned by him who, on a late occasion, could meditate so finely on the TOMBS AT WESTMINSTER [b]. But surely, proceeded he, you warm yourself in this contemplation, beyond what the subject requires of you. The vanity of human greatness is seen in so many instances, that I wonder to hear you harangue on this with so peculiar an exultation. There is no travelling ten miles together in any part of the kingdom without stumbling on some ruin, which, though perhaps not so considerable as this before us, would furnish occasion, however, for the same reflexions. There would be no end of moralizing over every broken tower, or shattered fabric, which calls to mind the short-lived glories of our ancestors.

[b] In the 1st vol. of the SPECTATOR.

TRUE,

TRUE, said Mr. ADDISON; and, if the short continuance of these glories were the only circumstance, I might well have spared the exultation, you speak of, in this triumph over the shattered remnants of *Kenelworth*. But there is something else that fires me on the occasion. It brings to mind the fraud, the rapine, the insolence of the potent minister, who vainly thought to immortalize his ill-gotten glory by this proud monument. Nay, further, it awakens an indignation against the prosperous tyranny of those wretched times, and creates a generous pleasure in reflecting on the happiness we enjoy under a juster and more equal government. Believe me, I never see the remains of that greatness which arose in the past ages on the ruins of public freedom and private property, but I congratulate with myself on living at a time, when the meanest subject is as free and independent as those royal minions; and
when

when his property, whatever it be, is as secure from the oppression, as that of the first minister. And I own this congratulation is not the less sincere for considering that the instance before us is taken from the reign of the virgin queen, which it hath been the fashion to cry up above that of any other of our princes [*i*]. I desire no other confutation of so strange unthankful a preference, than the sight of this vast castle, together with the recollection of those means by which its master arrived at his enormous greatness.

YOUR indignation then, replied Dr. ARBUT NOT, is not so much of the moral, as *political* kind [*k*]. But is not the conclusion a little too hasty, when, from

[*i*] The factious use, that was afterwards made of this humour of magnifying the character of ELIZABETH, may be seen in the *Craftsman*, and *Remarks on the History of England*.

[*k*] What the *political* character of Mr. ADDISON was, may be seen from his *whig-examiner*.

the

the instance of one over-grown favourite, you infer the general infelicity of the time, in which he flourished? I am not, I assure you, one of those unthankful men who forget the blessings they enjoy under a prince of more justice and moderation than queen ELIZABETH, and under a better constitution of government than prevailed in the days of our forefathers. Yet, setting aside some particular dishonours of that reign (of which, let the tyranny of *Leicester*, if you will, be one) I see not but the acknowledged virtues of that princess, and the wisdom of her government may be a proper foundation for all the honours, that posterity have ever paid to her.

WERE I even disposed to agree with you, returned Mr. ADDISON, I should not have the less reason for triumphing as I do on the present state of our government. For, if such abuses could creep in, and be suffered for so many years

years under so great a princess, what was there not to fear (as what, indeed, did not the subject actually feel) under some of her successors? But to speak my mind frankly, I see no sufficient grounds for the excessive prejudice, that hath somehow taken place, in favour of the GOLDEN REIGN, as it is called, OF ELIZABETH. I find neither the wisdom, nor the virtue in it, that can entitle it to a preference before all other ages.

ON the contrary, said Dr. ARBUTHNOT, I never contemplate the monuments of that time, without a silent admiration of the virtues that adorned it. Heroes and sages croud in upon my memory. Nay, the very people were of a character above what we are acquainted with in our days. I could almost fancy, the soil itself wore another face, and, as you poets imagine, on some occasions, that our ancestors lived under a brighter sun and happier climate than we can boast of.

To be sure, said Mr. ADDISON smiling; or, why not affirm, in the proper language of romance, that the women of those days were all chaste, and the men valiant? But can't you suspect at least that there is some enchantment in the case, and that your love of antiquity may possibly operate in more instances than those of your favourite *Greeks* and *Romans*? Tell me honestly, pursued he, hath not this distance of a century and half a little imposed upon you? Do not these broken towers, which moved you just now to so compassionate a lamentation over them, dispose you to a greater fondness for the times, in which they arose, than can be fairly justified?

I WILL not deny, returned Dr. ARBUTHNOT, but we are often very generous to the past times, and unjust enough to the present. But I think there is little of this illusion in the case before us.

And,

And, since you call my attention to these noble ruins, let me own to you, that they do indeed excite in me a veneration for the times, of which they present so striking a memorial. But surely not without reason. For there is scarce an object in view, that doth not revive the memory of some distinguishing character of that age, which may justify such veneration.

ALAS, interrupted Mr. ADDISON, and what can these objects call to mind but the memory of barbarous manners and a despotic government?

FOR the *government*, replied Dr. ARBUTHNOT, I do not well conceive how any conclusion about that can be drawn from this fabric. The MANNERS I was thinking of; and I see them strongly expressed in many parts of it. But whether barbarous or not, I could almost take upon me to dispute with you. And why,

why, indeed, since you allowed yourself to declaim on the vices, so apparent, as you suppose, in this monument of antiquity, may not I have leave to consider it in another point of view, and present to you the virtues which, to my eye at least, are full as discernible?

You cannot, continued he, turn your eyes on any part of these ruins, without encountering some memorial of the virtue, industry, or ingenuity of our ancestors.

Look there, said he, on that fine room (pointing to the HALL, that lay just beneath them) and tell me if you can help respecting the HOSPITALITY which so much distinguished the palaces of the great in those simpler ages. You gave an invidious turn to this circumstance, when you chose to consider it only in the light of wasteful expence and prodigality. But no virtue is privileged from an ill name. And, on second thoughts, I persuade

persuade myself it will appear you have injured this, by so uncandid an appellation. Can it deserve this censure, that the lord of this princely castle threw open his doors and spread his table for the reception of his friends, his followers, and even for the royal entertainment of his sovereign? Is any expence more proper than that which tends to conciliate [l] friendships, spread the interests of society, and knit mankind together by a generous communication in these advantages of wealth and fortune? The arts of a refined sequestered luxury were then unknown. The same bell, that called the great man to his table, invited the neighbourhood all around and proclaimed a holiday to the whole country [m]. Who does not feel the deco-

[l] LUCIAN expresses this use of the Table, prettily — ΦΙΛΙΑΣ ΜΕΣΙΤΗΝ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΑΝ. "Εξωλις, c. 27.

[m] Besides this sort of hospitality, there was another still more noble and disinterested, which distinguished the early times, especially the purer
rum,

rum, and understand the benefits of this magnificence? The pre-eminence of rank and fortune was nobly sustained: the subordination of society preserved: and yet the envy that is so apt to attend the great, happily avoided. Hence the weight and influence of the old nobility, who engaged the love, at the same time they commanded the veneration of the people. In the mean time rural industry flourished: private luxury was discouraged: and in both ways that frugal simplicity of life, our country's grace and

ages of chivalry. It was accustomary, it seems, for the great lords to fix up HELMETS on the roofs and battlements of their castles as a signal of hospitality to all adventurers and noble passengers. “Adonques estoit une coustume en la grant Bretagne (says the author of the old romance, called PERCEFOREST) et fut tant que charité regna illecque, tous gentils hommes et nòbles dames faisoient mettre au plus hault de leur hostel ung heaulme, en signe que tous gentils hommes et gentilles femmes trespasans les chemins, entraissent hardyement en leur hostel comme en leur propre; car leurs biens estoient davantage à tous nobles hommes et femmes trespasans le royaulme.” Vol. iii. f. 103.

ornament in those days, was preserved and promoted.

IT would spoil your panegyric, I doubt, said Mr. ADDISON, to observe the factious use, that was made of this magnificence, and the tendency it had to support the pride and insolence of the old nobility. The interest of the great, I am afraid, was but another name for the slavery of the people [n].

[n] This is not said without authority, "Give me leave, says one, to hold this paradox, that the English were never more idle, never more ignorant in manual arts, never more factious in following the parties of princes or their landlords, never more base (as I may say) trencher-slaves, than in that age, wherein great men kept open houses for all comers and goers: And that in our age, wherein we have better learned each man to live of his own, and great men keep not such troops of idle servants, not only the English are become very industrious and skilful in manual arts, but also the tyranny of lords and gentlemen is abated, whereby they nourished private dissensions and civil wars, with the destruction of the common people." FYNES MORYSON's *Itinerary*, Part. III. Ch. v.

I SEE

I SEE it, Dr. ARBUTHNOT said, in a different light; and so did our princes themselves, who could not but be well acquainted with the proper effects of that interest. They considered the weight of the nobility, as a counterpoise to their own sovereignty. It was on this account they had used all means to lessen their influence. But the consequence was beside their expectation. The authority of the crown fell with it: and, which was still less expected by political men, the liberty of the people, after it had wanted for a time, sunk under the general oppression. It was then discovered, but a little of the latest, that public freedom throve best, when it wound itself about the stock of the antient nobility. In truth, it was the defect, not the excess, of patrician influence that made way for the miseries of the next century.

You see then it is not without cause that I lay a stress, even in a political view, on this popular hospitality of the great in the former ages [o].

BUT, lest you think I sit too long at the table, let us go on to the TILTYARD, which lies just before us; that school of fortitude and honour to our generous forefathers. A younger fancy, than mine, would be apt to kindle at the sight. And our sprightlier friend here, I dare

[o] Dr. ARBUTHNOT, too, has his authority: a famous politician of the last century expresseth himself to much the same purpose, after his manner. "Henceforth, says he [that is, after the statutes against retainers in HEN. VII's reign] the country lives, and *great tables* of the nobility, which no longer nourished veins that would bleed for them, were fruitless and loathsome till they changed the air, and of princes became *courtiers*; where their revenues never to have been exhausted by beef and mutton, were found *narrow*; whence followed racking of rents, and, at length, sale of lands." SIR JAMES HARRINGTON'S OCEANA, p. 40. Lond. 1656.

say,

say, has already taken fire at the remembrance of the gallant exercises, which were celebrated in that quarter.

MR. DIGBY owned, he had a secret veneration for the manly games of that time, which he had seen so triumphantly set forth in the old poets and romancers.

RIGHT, said Mr. ADDISON; it is precisely in that circumstance that the enchantment consists. Some of our best wits have taken a deal of idle pains to ennoble a very barbarous entertainment, and recommend it to us under the specious name of gallantry and honour. But Mr. DIGBY sees through the cheat. Not that I doubt, continued he, but the doctor, now he is in the vein of panegyric, will lay a mighty stress on these barbarities; and perhaps compare them with the exercises in the *Roman Circus*, or the *Olympic Barriers*.

AND why not? interrupted Dr. ARBUTHNOT. The tendency of all three was the same; to invigorate the faculties both of mind and body; to give strength, grace, and dexterity to the limbs; and fire the mind with a generous emulation of the manly and martial virtues.

WHY truly, said Mr. ADDISON, I shall not deny that all *three*, as you observe, were much of the same merit. And now your hand is in for this sort of encomium, do not forget to celebrate the sublime taste of our forefathers for *bear-baiting* [p], as well as *tilting*; and tell

[p] True it is, that this divertisement of *bear-baiting* was not altogether unknown in the age of ELIZABETH, and, as it seemeth, not much disliked of master STOW himself, who hath very graphically described it. He is speaking of the *Danish* ambassador's reception and entertainment at *Greenwich* in 1586. "As the better sort, saith he, had their convenient disports, so were not the ordinary people excluded from competent pleasure. For, upon a green, very spacious and large, where thousands

us too, how gloriously the mob of those days, as well as their betters, used to belabour one another.

I CONFESS, said Dr. ARBUTHNOT, the softness of our manners makes it difficult

might stand and behold with good contentment, there BEAR-BAITING and bull-baiting (tempered with other merry disports) were exhibited; whereat it cannot be spoken of what pleasure the people took.

For it was a sport alone, of these beasts, continueth the historian, to see the bear with his pink eyes leering after his enemies; the nimbleness and wait of the dog to take his advantage; and the force and experience of the bear again to avoid the assaults: if he were bitten in one place, how he would pinch in another to get free; and if he were once taken, then what shift with biting, clawing, roling, tugging, grasping, tumbling, and tossing, he would work to wind himself away; and, when he was loose, to shake his ears with the blood and flaver about his phisnomy, was a pittance of good relief. The like pastime also of the bull. — And now the day being far spent, and the sun in his declination, the embassador withdrew to his lodging by barge to CROSBY'S place; where, no doubt, THIS DAY'S SOLEMNITY WAS THOUGHT UPON AND TALKED OF" — p. 1562.

to speak on this subject without incurring the ridicule, you appear so willing to employ against me. But you must not think to discredit these gymnastics by a little raillery, which has its foundation only in modern prejudices. For it is no secret, that the gravest and politest men of antiquity were of my mind. You will hardly suspect PLATO of incivility, either in his notions or manners. And need I remind you how much he insists on the gymnastic discipline? without which he could not have formed, or at least have supported his republic.

IT was upon this principle, I suppose then, said Mr. DIGBY, or perhaps in imitation of his *Græcian* master, that our MILTON laid so great a stress on this discipline in his TRACTATE OF EDUCATION. And before him, in the very time you speak of, ASCHAM, I observe, took no small pains to much the same purpose, in his TOXOPHILUS.

IT is very clear, resumed Dr. ARBUTHNOT, from these instances, and many more that might be given, that the ancients were not singular in their notions on this subject. But since you have drawn me into a grave defence of these exercises, let me further own to you that I think the *Gothic* Tilts and Tournaments exceeded, both in use and elegance, even the *Græcian* gymnastics [q]. They were a more direct image of war, than any of the games at *Olympia*. And if *Xenophon* could be so lavish in his praises on the *Persian* practice of hunting, because it had some resemblance to the exercise of arms, what would he not have said of an institution, which has all the forms of a real combat?

BUT there was an elegance, too, in the conduct of the tournament, that might reconcile it even to modern delicacy. For,

[q] See the *Anacharsis* of LUCIAN.

besides the splendor of the shew; the dexterity, with which these exercises were performed; and the fancy, that appeared in their accoutrement, dresses, and devices; the whole contest was enobled with an air of gallantry that must have had a great effect in refining the manners of the combatants. And yet this gallantry had no ill influence on morals; for, as you insulted me just now, it was the odd humour of those days for the women to pride themselves in their chastity [*r*], as well as the men in their valour.

[*r*] If the reader be complaisant enough to admit the fact, it may be accounted for, on the ideas of chivalry, in the following manner. The knight forfeited all pretensions to the favour of the ladies, if he failed, in any degree, in the point of valour. And, reciprocally, the claim which the ladies had to protection and courtesy from the order of knights, was founded singly in the reputation of chastity, which was the female point of honour. “Ce droit que les dames avoient sur la chevalerie (says M. DE LA CURNE DE STE. PALAYE) devoit être conditionel: il supposoit que leur conduite et leur reputa-

IN short, I consider the *Tournay*, as the best school of civility as well as heroism. "High-erected thoughts, seated in a heart of courtesy," as an old writer [s] well expresses it, was the proper character of such as had been trained in this discipline.

No wonder then, pursued he, the old poets and romance-writers took so much pains to immortalize these trials of manhood. It was but what PINDAR and HOMER himself, those old masters of romance, had done before them. And

tion ne les rendoient point indignes de l'espece d'affociation qui les unissoit à cet ordre uniquement fondé sur l'honneur.

Par celle voye (says an old *French* writer, the chevalier DE LA TOUR, about the year 1371) les bonnes se craignoient et se tenoient plus fermes de faire chose dont elles peussent perdre leur honneur et leur estat. *Si voudroie que celui temps fust revenu, car je pense qu'il n'en seroit pas tant de blasmiées comme il est à present.*

[s] SIR PHILIP SYDNEY.

how

how could it be otherwise? The shew itself, as I said, had something very taking in it; whilst every graceful attitude of person, with every generous movement of the mind, afforded the finest materials for description. And I am even ready to believe that what we hear censured in their writings, as false, incredible, and fantastic, was frequently but a just copy of life, and that there was more of truth and reality [*t*] in their representations, than we are apt to imagine. Their notions of honour and gallantry were carried to an elevation [*u*], which, in these

[*t*] What is hinted, here, of the *reality* of these representations, hath been lately shewn at large in a learned memoir on this subject, which the reader will find in the xxth Tom. of HIST. DE L'ACAD. DES INSCRIPTIONS ET BELLES LETTRES.

[*u*] This representation of things in the ages of chivalry agrees with what we are told by the author of the memoir, just quoted. “Les premières leçons,” (says he, speaking of the manner in which the youth were educated in the houses of the Great, which were properly the schools of those times) “qu'on leur donnoit, regardoient principalement
degenerate

degenerate days, hurts the credit of their story; just as I have met with men that

palemment *l'amour de dieu, et Des dames*, c'est-à-dire, la religion, et la galanterie. Mais autant la dévotion qu'on leur inspiroit étoit accompagnée de puerilités et de superstitions, autant l'amour des dames, qu'on leur recommandoit, étoit il rempli de RAFFINEMENT et de FANATISME. Il semble qu'on ne pouvoit, dans ces siècles ignorans et grossiers, présenter aux hommes la religion sous une forme assez matérielle pour la mettre à leur portée; ni leur donner, en même tems, une idée de l'amour assez pure, assez métaphysique, pour prévenir les desordres et les excès, dont étoit capable une nation qui conservoit par-tout le caractère impetueux qu'elle montroit à la guerre." Tom. xx. p. 600.

One sees then the origin of that furious gallantry which runs through the old romances. And so long as the *refinement and fanaticism*, which the writer speaks of, were kept in full vigour by the force of institution and the fashion of the times, the morals of these enamoured knights might, for any thing I know, be as pure as their apologist represents them. At the same time it must be confessed that this discipline was of a nature very likely to relax itself under another state of things, and certainly to be misconstrued by those who should come to look upon these pictures of a *refined and spiritual passion*, as incredible and fantastic. And hence, no doubt, we are to account for that censure which a famous writer
have

have doubted whether the virtues of the REGULI and the SCIPIOS of antient fame were not the offspring of pure fancy.

ter, and one of the ornaments of ELIZABETH'S own age, passeth on the old books of chivalry. His expression is downright, and somewhat coarse. "In our fathers time nothing was red but books of chivalry, wherein a man, by reading, should be led to none other end, but only to *manslaughter* and *baudrye*. If any man suppose they were good enough to pass the time withall, he is deceived. For surely vain words do work no small thing in vain, ignorant, and young minds, especially if they be given any thing thereunto of their own nature." He adds, like a good protestant, "These books, as I have heard say, were made the most part in abbayes and monasteries; a very likely and fit fruit of such an idle and blind kind of living." *Præf. to ASCHAM'S TOXOPHILUS, 1571.*

I thought it but just to set down this censure of Mr. ASCHAM over-against the candid representation of the French memorialist.—However, what is said of the influence, which this ancient institution had on the character of his countrymen, is not to be disputed. "Les preceptes d'amour repandoient dans le commerce des dames ces considerations et ces egards respectueux, qui, n'ayant jamais été effacés de l'esprit des François, ont toujours fait un des caracteres distinctifs de nôtre nation."

NAY now, Dr. ARBUTHNOT, said Mr. ADDISON, you grow quite extravagant. What you, who are used to be so quick at espying all abuses in science, and defects in good taste, turn advocate for these fopperies! Mr. DIGBY and I shall begin to think you banter us, in this apology for the antient gymnastics, and are only preparing a chapter for the facetious memoirs [*w*], you sometimes promise us.

NEVER more in earnest, I assure you, replied the doctor. I know what you have to object to these pictures of life and manners. But if they will not bear examining as copies, they may deserve to be imitated, as models. And their use, methinks, might atone for some defects in the article of probability.

[*w*] Of SCRIBLERUS. See the vith chapter of that learned work, *On the antient Gymnastics*.

For my part, I consider the legends of
 antient chivalry in a very serious light,

As *Niches*, fill'd with statues, to invite
 Young valours forth — [x],

as BEN JOHNSON, a valorous hardy
 poet, and who, himself, would have made
 a good knight-errant, justly says of them.
 For it is certain, they had this effect.
 The youth, in general, were fired with
 the love of martial exercises. They
 were early formed to habits of fatigue
 and enterprize. And, together with this
 warlike spirit, the profession of chivalry
 was favourable to every other virtue.
 Affability, courtesy, generosity, veracity,
 these were the qualifications most pre-
 tended to by the men of arms, in the
 days of pure and uncorrupted chivalry.
 We do not perhaps, ourselves, know, at
 this distance of time, how much we are
 indebted to the force of this singular in-

[x] MASQUES, p. 181. WHALLEY'S edition.

stitution. But this I may presume to say, that the men, among whom it arose and flourished most, had prodigious obligations to it. No policy, even of an antient legislator, could have contrived a better expedient to cultivate the manners and tame the spirits of a rude and ignorant people. I could almost fancy it providentially introduced among the northern nations, to break the fierceness of their natures, and prevent that brutal savageness and ferocity of character, which must otherwise have grown upon them in the darker ages.

NAY, the generous sentiments, it inspired, perhaps contributed very much to awaken an emulation of a different kind; and to bring on those days of light and knowledge which have disposed us, somewhat unthankfully, to vilify and defame it. This is certain, that the first essays of wit and poetry, those harbingers of returning day to every species of

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good letters, were made in the bosom of chivalry, and amidst the assemblies of noble dames, and courteous knights: And we may even observe, that the best of our modern princes, such as have been most admired for their personal virtues, and have been most concerned in restoring all the arts of civility and politeness, have been passionately addicted to the feats of ancient prowess. In the number of these, need I remind you of the courts of FRANCIS I, and HENRY IV, to say nothing of our own EDWARDS and HENRYS, and that mirrour of all their virtues in one, our renowned and almost romantic ELIZABETH [y].

[y] This romantic spirit of the Queen may be seen as well in her *amours*, as military achievements. “Ambiri, coli ob formam, et AMORIBUS, etiam inclinâtâ jam ætate, videri voluit; de FABULOSIS INSULIS per illam relaxationem renovatâ quasi memoriâ in quibus EQUITES AC STRENUI HOMINES ERRABANT, et AMORES, fœditate omni prohibitâ, generosè per VIRTUTEM exercebant.” THUANI Hist. tom. vi. p. 172.

The observation of the great historian is confirmed

BUT

BUT you think I push the argument too far. And less than this may dispose

by FRANCIS OSEBORNE, Esq. who, speaking of a contrivance of the *Cecilian* party to ruin the earl of ESSEX, by giving him a rival in the good graces of the queen, observes—"But the whole result concluding in a duel, did rather inflame than abate the former account she made of him: the opinion of a CHAMPION being more splendid (in the weak and romantic sense of women, that admit of nothing fit to be made the object of a quarrel but themselves) and far above that of a captain or general. So as Sir EDMUND CARY, brother to the Lord HUNSDEN, then chamberlain and near kinsman to the Queen, told me, that, though she chid them both, nothing pleased her better than a conceit she had, that her *beauty* was the subject of this quarrel, when, God knows, it grew from the stock of honour, of which then they were very tender."—MEM. OF Q. ELIZABETH, p. 456.

But nothing shews the romantic disposition of the Queen, and indeed of her times, more evidently than the TRIUMPH, as it was called; devised and performed with great solemnity, in honour of the *French* commissioners in 1581. The contrivance was for four of her principal courtiers, under the quaint appellation of "four foster-children of DESIRE," to besiege and carry by dint of arms, "THE FORTRESS OF BEAUTY; intending, by this courtly

you to conceive with reverence of the scene before us, which must ever be regarded as a nursery of brave men, a very seed-plot of warriors and heroes. I consider the successes at the barriers, as preludes to future conquests in the field. And, as whimsical a figure as a young tilter may make in your eye, who will say that the virtue was not formed here, that triumphed at AXELL and bled at ZUTPHEN?

ænigma, nothing less than the queen's majesty's own person.—The actors in this famous triumph, were, the Earl of ARUNDEL, the Lord WINDSOR, Master PHILIP SIDNEY, and Master FULK GREVIL." And the whole was conducted so entirely in the spirit and language of knight-errantry, that nothing in the Arcadia itself is more romantic. See the account at large in STOW's continuation of HOLING-SHEAD's Chronicles, p. 1316—1321.

To see the drift and propriety of this triumph, it is to be observed that the business which brought the *French* commissioners into *England*, was, the great affair of the queen's marriage with the duke of ALANÇON.

WE shall very readily, replied Mr. ADDISON, acknowledge the bravery and other virtues of the young hero, whose fortunes you hint at. He was, in truth, to speak the language of that time, the very flower of knighthood, and contributed more than any body else, by his pen, as well as sword, to throw a lustre on the profession of chivalry. But the thing itself, however adorned by his wit and recommended by his manners, was barbarous; the offspring of *Gothic* fierceness; and shews the times, which favoured it so much, to have scarcely emerged from their original rudeness and brutality. You may celebrate, as loudly as you please, the deeds of these wonder-working knights. Alas, what affinity have such prodigies to our life and manners? The old poet, you quoted just now with approbation, shall tell us the difference:

These were bold stories of our *Arthur's* age:
 But here are other acts, another stage
 And scene appears ; it is not since as then ;
 No giants, dwarfs, or monsters here, but
 MEN [z].

OR, if you want a higher authority,
 we should not, methinks, on such an occasion,
 forget the admirable CERVANTES,
 whose ridicule hath brought eternal
 dishonour on the profession of knight-
 errantry.

WITH your leave, interrupted Dr.
 ARBUTHNOT, I have reason to except
 against both your authorities. At best,
 they do but condemn the *abuses* of chivalry,
 and the madness of continuing the
 old romantic spirit in times when, from a
 change of manners and policy, it was no
 longer in season. Adventures, we will
 say, were of course to cease, when giants
 and monsters disappeared. And yet have
 they totally disappeared, and have giants

[z] Speeches at Prince HENRY's barriers.

and

and monsters been no where heard of out of the castles and forests of our old romancers? 'Tis odds, methinks, but, in the sense of ELIZABETH's good subjects, PHILIP II might be a *giant* at least: and, without a little of this adventurous spirit, it may be a question whether all her enchanterers, I mean her BURLEIGHS and WALSINGHAMS, would have proved a match for him. I mention this the rather to shew you, how little obligation his countrymen have to your CERVANTES for laughing away the remains of that prowess, which was the best support of the *Spanish* monarchy.

As if, said Mr. ADDISON, the prowess of any people were only to be kept alive by their running mad. But let the case of the *Spaniards* be what it will, surely we, of this country, have little obligation to the spirit of chivalry, if it were only that it produced, or encouraged at least, and hath now entailed upon us the curse

of duelling; which even yet domineers in the fashionable world, in spite of all that wit, and reason, and religion itself have done to subdue it. 'Tis true, at present this law of arms is appealed to only in the case of some high point of nice and mysterious honour. But in the happier days you celebrate, it was called in aid, on common occasions. Even questions of right and property, you know, were determined at the barriers [a]: and brute force was allowed the most equitable, as well as shortest, way of deciding all disputes both concerning a man's estate and honour.

[a] There was an instance of this kind, and perhaps the latest upon record in our history, in the 13th year of the queen, when "a combat was appointed to have been fought for a certain manor, and demain lands belonging theret, in *Kent*." The matter was compromised, in the end. But not till after the usual forms had been observed, by the two parties: of which we have a curious and circumstantial detail in *Holingshead's* chronicles, p. 1225.

You

You might observe too, interposed Dr. ARBUTHNOT, that this was the way in which those fiercer disputes concerning a mistress, or a kingdom, were frequently decided. And, if this sort of decision, in such cases, were still in use among Christian princes, you might call it perhaps a barbarous custom, but would it be ever the worse, do you think, for their good subjects?

PERHAPS it would not, returned Mr. ADDISON, in some instances. And yet will you affirm, that those *good subjects* were in any enviable situation, under their fighting masters? After all, allowing you to put the best construction you can on these usages of our forefathers,

“all we find

Is that they did their work and din'd.”

And, though such feats may argue a sound athletic constitution, you must excuse

cuse me, if I am not forward to entertain any high notions of their civility.

THEIR civility, said Dr. ARBUTHNOT, is another consideration. The HALL and TILT-YARD are certainly good proofs of what they are alledged for, the hospitality and bravery of our ancestors. But it hath not been maintained, that these were their only virtues. On the contrary, as it seemed to me, every flower of humanity, every elegance of art and genius, was cultivated amongst them. For an instance, need we look any further than the LAKE, which in the flourishing times of this castle was so famous, and which we even now trace in the winding bed of that fine meadow?

I DON'T understand you, replied Mr. ADDISON. I can easily imagine what an embellishment that lake must have been to the castle; but am at a loss to conceive what flowers of wit and ingenuity,

to use your own ænigmatical language, could be raised or so much as watered by it.

AND have you then, returned Dr. ARBUTHNOT, so soon forgotten the large description, you gave us just now, of the shews and pageants displayed on this lake? And can any thing better declare the art, invention, and ingenuity of their conductors? Is not this Canal as good a memorial of the ardour and success with which the finer exercises of the mind were pursued in that time, as the Tilt-yard, we have now left, is of the address and dexterity shewn in those of the body?

I REMEMBER, said Mr. ADDISON, that many of the shews, intended for the queen's entertainment at this place, were exhibited on that canal. But as to any art or beauty of contrivance —

“ You see none, I suppose.”

WHY

WHY truly none, resumed Mr. ADDISON. To me they seemed but well enough suited to the other barbarities of the time. "The lady of the Lake and her train of Nereids," was not that the principal? And can it pass for any thing better than a jumble of *Gothic* romance and pagan fable? A barbarous modern conceit, varnished over with a little classical pedantry?

AND is that the best word you can afford, said Dr. ARBUTHNOT, to these ingenious devices? The business was to welcome the Queen to this palace, and at the same time to celebrate the honours of her government. And what more decent way of complimenting a great Prince, than through the veil of fiction? Or what so elegant way of entertaining a learned Prince, as by working up that fiction out of the old poetical story? And if something of the *Gothic* romance adhered

hered to these classical fictions, it was not for any barbarous pleasure, that was taken in this patchwork, but that the artist found means to incorporate them with the highest grace and ingenuity. For what, in other words, was the *Lady of the Lake* (the particular, that gives most offence to your delicacy) but the presiding nymph of the stream, on which these shews were presented? And, if the contrivance was to give us this nymph under a name that romance had made familiar, what was this but taking advantage of a popular prejudice to introduce his fiction with more address and probability?

BUT see the propriety of the scene itself, for the designer's purpose, and the exact decorum with which these fanciful personages were brought in upon it. It was not enough, that the pagan deities were summoned to pay their homage to the queen. They were the deities of

the fount and ocean, the watry nymphs and demi-gods: and these were to play their part in their own element. Could any preparation be more artful for the panegyric designed on the naval glory of that reign? Or, could any representation be more grateful to the queen of the ocean, as ELIZABETH was then called, than such as expressed her sovereignty in those regions? Hence the sea-green Nereids, the Tritons, and Neptune himself were the proper actors in the drama. And the opportunity of this spacious lake gave the easiest introduction, and most natural appearance to the whole scenery. Let me add, too, in further commendation of the taste which was shewn in these agreeable fancies, that the attributes and dresses of the deities themselves were studied with care; and the most learned poets of the time employed to make them speak, and act in character. So that an old *Greek* or *Roman* might have applauded the contrivance,

vance, and have almost fancied himself assisting at a religious ceremony in his own country.

AND, to shew you that all this propriety was intended by the designer himself, and not imagined at pleasure by his encomiast, I remember, that, when some years after the earl of HERTFORD had the honour to receive the queen at his seat in *Hampshire*, because he had no such canal as this in readiness on the occasion, he set on a vast number of hands to hollow a basin in his park for that purpose. With so great diligence and so exact a decorum were these entertainments conducted!

DID not I tell you, interposed Mr. ADDISON, addressing himself to Mr. DIGBY, to what an extravagance the doctor's admiration of the antient times would carry him? Could you have expected all this harangue on the art, elegance,

gance, and decorum of THE PRINCELY PLEASURES OF KENELWORTH [b]? And must not it divert you to see the unformed genius of that age tricked out in the graces of a *Roman* or even *Attic* politeness?

MR. DIGBY acknowledged, it was very generous in the doctor to represent in so fair a light the amusements of the ruder ages. But I was thinking, said he, to what cause it could possibly be owing, that these pagan fancies had acquired so general a consideration in the days of ELIZABETH.

THE general passion for these fancies, returned Dr. ARBUTHNOT, was a natural consequence of the revival of learning. The first books, that came into vogue,

[b] Alluding to a tract, so called, by GASCOIGNE, an attendant on the court, and poet of that time, who hath given us a narrative of the entertainments that passed on this occasion at *Kenelworth*.

were

were the poets. And nothing could be more amusing to rude minds, just opening to a taste of letters, than the fabulous story of the pagan gods, which is constantly interwoven in every piece of ancient poetry. Hence the imitative arts of *sculpture*, *painting*, and *poetry* were immediately employed in these pagan exhibitions. But this was not all. The first artists in every kind were, of *Italy*; and it was but natural for them to act these fables over again on the very spot, that had first produced them. These, too, were the masters to the rest of *Europe*. So that *fashion* concurred, with the other prejudices of the time, to recommend this practice to the learned.

FROM the men of art and literature the enthusiasm spread itself to the great; whose supreme delight it was to see the wonders of the old poetical story brought forth, and realized, as it were, before

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them [c]. And what, in truth, could they do better? For, if I were not a little

[c] Hence then it is that a celebrated dramatic writer of those days represents the entertainment of MASKS and SHEWS, as the highest indulgence that could be provided for a luxurious and happy monarch. His words are these ;

“ Music and poetry are his delight.

Therefore I'll have *Italian* masques by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shews ;
And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,
Like SILVAN NYMPHS, my pages shall be clad :
My men, like SATYRS, grazing on the lawns,
Shall with their goat-feet dance the antic hay ;
Sometimes a lovely boy in DIAN's shape,
With hair, that gilds the water as it glides,
Crownets of pearls about his naked arms,
And in his sportful hands an olive-tree,
Shall bathe him in a spring, and there hard by
One like ACTAEON, peeping thro' the grove,
Shall by the angry Goddess be transform'd—
Such things as these best please his majesty.

MARLOW's Edward II.

And how exactly this dramatist painted the humour of the times, we may see from the entertainment provided, not many years after, for the reception of King JAMES at *Althorp* in *Northamptonshire* ; where this very design of *Silvan Nymphs*, *Satyrs*, and ACTAEON was executed in a masque by B. JOHNSON.

afraid

afraid of your raillery, I should desire to know what courtly amusements even of our time are comparable to the shews and masques, which were the delight and improvement of the court of ELIZABETH. I say, the *improvement*; for, besides that these shews were not in the number of the INERUDITÆ VOLUPTATES, so justly characterised and condemned by a wise antient, they were even highly useful and instructive. These devices, composed out of the poetical history, were not only the vehicles of compliment to the great on certain solemn occasions, but of the soundest moral lessons, which were artfully thrown in, and recommended to them by the charm of poetry and numbers. Nay, some of these masques were moral dramas in form, where the virtues and vices were impersonated. We know the cast of their composition by what we see of these fictions in the next reign; and have reason to conceive of them with reverence when we find the names of

FLETCHER and JOHNSON [*d*] to some of them. I say nothing of JONES and LAWES, though all the elegance of their respective arts was called in to assist the poet in the contrivance and execution of these entertainments.

AND, now the poets have fallen in my way, let me further observe, that the manifest superiority of this class of writers in ELIZABETH's reign, and that of her successor, over all others who have succeeded to them, is, amongst other reasons, to be ascribed to the care with which these moral representations were then cultivated. This taught them to animate and impersonate every thing. And though the original of this practice be owing, as it always is, to rude conception,

[*d*] Whom his friend Mr. SELDEN characterizeth in this manner,

“ Omnia carmina doctus
Et calles mythæ, plasmata et historiam.”

TIT. OF HON. p. 466.

yet

yet the improvements of it are the reason that we find in the phraseology and mode of thinking of that time, and of that time only, the essence of the truest and sublimest poetry.

WITHOUT doubt, Mr. ADDISON said, the poetry of that time is of a better taste than could well have been expected from its barbarism in other instances. But such prodigies as SHAKESPEAR and SPENCER would do great things in any age, and under every disadvantage.

MOST certainly they would, returned Dr. ARBUTHNOT, but not the things that you admire so much in these immortal writers. And, if you will excuse the intermixture of a little philosophy in these ramblings, I will attempt to account for it.

THERE is, I think, in the revolutions of taste and language a certain point,
 O 3 which

which is more favourable to the purposes of poetry, than any other. It may be difficult to fix this point with exactness. But we shall hardly mistake in supposing it lies somewhere between the rude essays of uncorrected fancy, on the one hand, and the refinements of reason and science, on the other,

AND such appears to have been the condition of our language in the age of ELIZABETH. It was pure, strong, and perspicuous without affectation. At the same time, the high figurative manner, which fits a language so peculiarly for the uses of the poet, had not yet been controlled by the prosaic genius of philosophy and logic. Indeed this character had been struck so deeply into the *English* tongue, that it was not to be removed by any ordinary improvements in either: the reason of which might be, the delight which was taken by the *English* very early in their old MYSTERIES
and

and MORALITIES, and the continuance of the same spirit in succeeding times, by means of their MASQUES and TRIUMPHS. And something like this, I observe, attended the progress of the *Greek* and *Roman* poetry; which was the *truest* poetry, on the clown's maxim in SHAKESPEAR, because it was *the most feigning* [e]. It had its rise, you know, like ours, from religion: And pagan religion, of all others, was the properest to introduce and encourage a spirit of allegory and moral fiction. Hence we easily account for the allegoric cast of their old dramas, which have a great resemblance to our antient moralities. NECESSITY, is brought in as a *person of the drama*, in one of ÆSCHYLUS's plays, and DEATH, in one of EURIPIDES; to say nothing of

[e] *Sacrifices, says PLUTARCH, without choruses and without music, we have known: but for poetry, without fable and without fiction, we know of no such thing. Θυσίας μὲν ἀχόρου καὶ ἀναύλους ἴσμεν, ἐκ ἴσμεν δὲ ἄμυθον ἐδὲ ἀψευδῆ πώοισιν.* De aud. poet. vol. i. p. 16.

many shadowy persons in the comedies of ARISTOPHANES. The truth is, the pagan religion *deified* every thing, and delivered these deities into the hands of their painters, sculptors, and poets. In like manner, christian superstition, or, if you will, modern barbarism, *impersonated* every thing; and these persons, in proper form, subsisted for some time on the stage, and almost to our days in the masques. Hence the picturesque style of our old poetry; which looks so fanciful in SPENSER, and which SHAKESPEAR'S genius hath carried to the utmost sublimity.

I WILL not deny, said Mr. ADDISON, but there may be something in this deduction of the causes, by which you account for the strength and grandeur of the *English* poetry, unpolished as it still was in the hands of ELIZABETH'S great poets. But for the masques themselves —

You

YOU forget, I believe, *one*, interrupted Dr. ARBUTHNOT, which does your favourite poet, MILTON, almost as much honour, as his *Paradise Lost*.—But I have no mind to engage in a further vindication of these fancies. I only conclude that the taste of the age, the state of letters, the genius of the *English* tongue, was such as gave a manliness to their compositions of all sorts, and even an elegance to those of the lighter forms, which we might do well to emulate, and not deride, in this æra of politeness.

BUT I am aware, as you say, I have been transported too far. My design was only to hint to you, in opposition to your invective against the memory of the old times, awakened in us by the sight of this castle, that what you objected to is capable of a much fairer interpretation. You have a proof of it, in two or three instances; in their festivals, their exercises,

cises, and their poetical fictions: or, to express myself in the classical forms, you have seen by this view of their CONVIVIAL, GYMNASTIC, and MUSICAL character, that the times of ELIZABETH may pass for golden, notwithstanding what a fondness for this age of baser metal may incline us to represent it.

IN the mean time, these smaller matters have drawn me aside from my main purpose. What surprized me most, pursued he, was to hear you speak so slightly, I would not call it by a worse name, of the GOVERNMENT of ELIZABETH. Of the manners and tastes of different ages, different persons, according to their views of things, will judge very differently. But plain facts speak so strongly in favour of the policy of that reign, and the superior talents of the sovereign, that I could not but take it for the wantonness of opposition in you to espouse the contrary opinion. And, now I am warmed
by

by this slight skirmish, I am even bold enough to dare you to a defence of it; if, indeed, you were serious in advancing that strange paradox. At least, I could wish to hear upon what grounds you would justify so severe an attack on the reverend administration of that reign, supported by the wisdom of such men as CECIL and WALSINGHAM, under the direction of so accomplished a princess as our ELIZABETH. Your manner of defending even the wrong side of the question will, at least, be entertaining. And, I think, I may answer for our young friend that his curiosity will lead him to join me in this request to you.

MR. ADDISON said, He did not expect to be called to so severe an account of what had escaped him on this subject. But, though I was ever so willing, continued he, to oblige you, this is no time or place for entering on such a controversy. We have not yet completed the
round

round of these buildings. And I would fain, methinks, make the circuit of that pleasant meadow. Besides its having been once, in another form, the scene of those shews you described so largely to us, it will deserve to be visited for the sake of the many fine views which, as we wind along it, we may promise to ourselves of these ruins.

You forget my bad legs, said Dr. ARBUTHNOT smiling; otherwise, I suppose, we can neither of us have any dislike to your proposal. But, as you please: let us descend from these heights. We may resume the conversation, as we walk along; and especially, as you propose, when we get down into that valley.

The End of the FIRST VOLUME.



